WITH THE FIRST CANADIAN CONTINGENT

PUBLISHED FOR THE
CANADIAN FIELD COMFORTS COMMISSION

FIELD-MARSHAL H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT, K.G.,
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA.

WITH THE FIRST CANADIAN CONTINGENT

PUBLISHED ON BEHALF OF THE
CANADIAN FIELD COMFORTS COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

This book is intended as a slight record of the 1st Canadian Contingent, who endured the hard winter at Salisbury with such courage, cheerfulness and patience, and who fought so gallantly and determinedly at Ypres.

It is also a means of adding to the funds of the Canadian Field Comforts Commission, for the purchase for the Canadian Division at the Front of many extra comforts, which are welcomed by the officers and much appreciated by the men.

My thanks are due to Mrs. G. W. MacKeen for the descriptions of the two camps; to Miss Arnoldi for her impression of Salisbury Plain as we saw it—we think there should be a special clasp for Salisbury Plain; to Miss Jessie Pope for "The Lads of the Maple Leaf"; to Canon Scott for two poems, "On the Rue du Bois" and "Requiescant"; to Captain Ambrose for "Mud"; to an M.O. for "The Men of God," and to many correspondents from the Front. I wish also to thank all those who have allowed me to use their photographs.

In Valcartier, at Amesbury, and now from Shorncliffe, Miss Arnoldi and I have had the privilege of working for our men. We have known and admired and loved them, and they have brought to all Canadians great honour together with much sorrow. This book of pictures is dedicated to the 1st Canadian Contingent.

Mary Plummer, Lieut.,
Canadian Field Comforts Commissioner.

Moore Barracks,
Shorncliffe.
September, 1915

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GENERAL SIR SAM HUGHES

In Farewell Address to the First Contingent

" What reck you whether your resting-place be decked with the golden lilies of France, or be amidst the vine-clad hills of the Rhine ; the principles for which you fought are eternal."

Photo Elliott & Fry.

MAJOR-GENERAL THE HON. SIR SAM HUGHES, K.C.B.,
MINISTER OF MILITIA AND DEFENCE

VIEW OF CAMP—VALCARTIER.

PONTOON BRIDGE—VALCARTIER.

VALCARTIER

By Elisabeth Flagler MacKeen

Where a little river winds over a sandy, slightly hilly plain, dotted with woods and lonely farms, among lovely Laurentian Mountains, grew Valcartier Camp.

Electrically lighted, with purified water and baths for every unit, with broad roads and board walks, with post-office and hospitals, a network of telephones, a bank and Y.M.C.A. tent, with canteens for soft drinks, goodies and smokes: in two short weeks it was ready for use.

Then came our lads—

> ". . . . . from Montreal,
> From Quebec and Saguenay,
> From Ungava, Labrador,
> All the lands about the Bay,
> Which old Hudson quested for."

Eager and earnest they were. Many had given up valuable positions, others with only their strong bodies and loyal hearts to give; they came from every walk and grade in life—trappers, ranchers, old soldiers, deep-sea fishermen, commercial travellers, lawyers, clerks, Indians, Jews, Americans, many English, and above all the Canadians born—but only the fittest, the Dominion's finest and best.

Ten miles round was the big camp, and to reach it one boarded a train at Quebec and rode for an hour or so, through a smiling land, to Valcartier Station. On the way was felt the change from normal life: the many officers and soldiers, the hospital car attached to the train, and at every bridge a little tent for the soldiers who guarded its safety.

A mile from Valcartier were seen the rifle-butts—the most extensive in the world; next came the station and the crush: crowds of people, ambulances, army transport waggons, cabs, motors, orderlies holding riding horses; and a distracted provost guard trying to preserve order.

Down the sandy road to the near-by camp one passed seventeen miles of switch tracks, crowded with cars of the Army Service Corps. Driving by the main guard, next was reached the office, where passes for entrance within the lines had to be obtained. Then down a long street, past headquarters—to the left a hill, and after that straight away on the right for three miles, through battalions of infantry and brigades of artillery and cavalry.

The camp was scrupulously clean; metal incinerators, like burning-ghats, lined the streets; left-over food was hourly consumed, while, nightly, carts removed all refuse. On either side the main roads, ditches four feet deep, crossed by many little bridges and filled with branches of spruce and fir, carried away the dirty water.

The carefully guarded pumping station was by the river. Beyond it floated the pontoon bridge leading to the big compound across the river, where thousands of horses were kept. One night they broke loose and made things lively. Three times the general alarm was sounded as the frightened creatures tore madly through and around the tents in their wild stampede. For the men perhaps it was good practice—a foretaste of night attacks.

Driving down the lines, one was struck by the "camaraderie" of the men, and enjoyed the little touches of daily life—such as two tall Highlanders scrubbing away with serious faces, washing their clothes in the waist-high troughs provided therefor, and gaily waving a pair of socks in greeting to the visitor. Perhaps near by a chap shaved himself before a small glass held by a friend, while across the street, in a slab chair, a barber was haircutting a cavalry-man, and another, standing by waiting his turn, gave sage advice. Farther on, a Habitant bade farewell to his black-eyed wife and child, exclaiming, "Brace ton père, petite!" as he kissed them both. Next there was a great merriment over an unfortunate who had slipped into the deep ditch and was extracted muddied to the neck. Farther up the street a kicking horse held up a whole battery of field artillery, returning from the ranges in the hills to the north. Only the deep disapproval of the other horses at last induced him to cease his antics.

The camp had plenty of mascots: a cinnamon bear from the West, a cross little black one from New Brunswick, a calf kidnapped near Winnipeg when a troop train stopped for water, a (powder ?) monkey for the artillery, and dogs beyond mentioning. Strangest of all, however, were two doves of the Royal Canadian Engineers; bill by nose with the horses, they used to eat their oats. Poor little emblems of vanished Peace, when will you come to your own again!

By noon always rose everywhere a blue wood smoke, and a savoury odour permeated the camp. Under their open sheds cooks

bustled about, cramming fuel into the little sheet-iron stoves, boiling water, frying potatoes, roasting meat.

Every man's daily ration, beside salt and pepper, was 1 oz. tea; ½ oz. coffee; 1 oz. cheese; 2 oz. each of jam, beans, butter and sugar; 6 oz. fresh vegetables; 1¼ lbs. bread; 1 lb. fresh meat; 1 lb. potatoes. Other allowances included 1 pint of oil and 1 cubic foot of wood. Each horse had 15 lbs. of hay and two of straw. Much fruit was also sent to the camp—notably from Ontario.

There was no loafing at Valcartier; it seethed and hummed like a hive. But in spite of the constant drilling, riding, marching and practising with rifles and artillery, the men were still keen for football and baseball; while on Sundays and rainy days, a sound of hymns and songs rose from the dripping tents.

And always and ever, never-ceasing, all-pervading, was the silvery sound of bugles. Buglers practising their calls, and bugles blowing for rising, for sleeping, for eating, for marching and hourly duties; always that music rang in one's ears, till the thought of Valcartier and it are as one.

So came at last the day when our first Contingent, perfectly equipped and, as an Army, absolutely self-contained; sailed away in thirty-one great grey transports guarded by seven cruisers, down the big river so many would never see again.

"Au revoir, God be with you, brave sons of the Empire,
Afar o'er the ocean, 'tis yours there to find
The reward that is due to the soldier heroic:
The prize-gift to Duty, by Courage assigned.
Stalwart to stalwart, goodbye one and all—
Our own giving heed to the Motherland's call,
Our own steeled to face whate'er may befall!"

" Watch an ye will and pray, no prayer forgetting,
For the brave hearts on yon dim waters rocked ;
But fear not for the end of that sun-setting,
The fire that burns on: faith wins—God is not mocked."

R. E. VERNEDE.

AT SEA—THE DANCE.

A WELCOME FROM THE TRAINING SHIP—PLYMOUTH.

AT SEA—A NEW SISTER.

AT SEA—THE LINE ASTERN.

AT SEA—GASPÉ BASIN.

ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS LINES—VALCARTIER.

ON THE RANGES, 90TH RIFLES (8TH BATTALION)—VALCARTIER.

KITCHENS, 90TH RIFLES (8TH BATTALION)—VALCARTIER.

LORD STRATHCONA HORSE LINES—
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FIELD COMFORTS TENT—
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COBOURG MEN, 2ND BATTALION—
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KIT INSPECTION, 11TH BATTALION—VALCARTIER.

48TH HIGHLANDERS (15TH BATTALION)—VALCARTIER.

REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 20TH, 1914—VALCARTIER.

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GOING TO THE REVIEW—VALCARTIER.

PIPES OUT FOR PRACTICE—VALCARTIER.

DISEMBARKATION—PLYMOUTH.

LYING ALONGSIDE—PLYMOUTH.

AT SEA—THE BOWS.

AT SEA—RECREATION HOUR.

AT SEA—BOXING MATCH.

AT SEA—CHURCH PARADE.

AT SEA—A FINE DAY.

AT SEA—THE START.

Photo Elliott & Fry.

LT.-GENERAL E. A. H. ALDERSON, C.B., COMMANDING
1ST CANADIAN DIVISION.

BY THE ROADSIDE—SALISBURY PLAIN.

Photo by A. F. Marett, Shrewton

ARTILLERY AT REVIEW—SALISBURY PLAIN.

CHURCH PARADE—SALISBURY PLAIN.

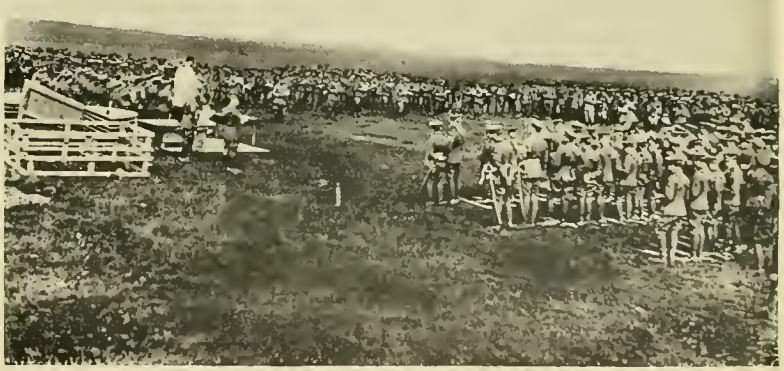


Photo by L. T. Fuller, Amesbury.

KIT INSPECTION, 48TH HIGHLANDERS (15TH BATTALION)—SALISBURY PLAIN.

HUTS AT LARKHILL, CANADIAN SCOTTISH (16TH BATTALION)—SALISBURY PLAIN.

ONE OF THE REMOUNTS—SALISBURY PLAIN.

Photo by T. L. Fuller, Amesbury.

SALISBURY PLAIN

By Elisabeth Flagler MacKeen

"From the Islands and the Highlands,
From the outposts of the earth,
On a hundred ships we hasten
To your side to prove our worth.
For, wherever peril calls abroad
For loyal hearts and guns,
We'll show the foe, that weal or woe,
We're Mother Britain's sons."

Last winter in Canada there were probably over 50,000 people to whom "Salisbury Plain" meant only the place where dwelt "our Johnnie," or "my poor Sandy," or "Cher Pierre." When they opened their papers of a morning, briskly they turned to news headed "Bustard Camp," or "Larkhill," or "Sling Plantation"; perhaps wondering that it contained no mention of the dear one. But whole units—let alone one man—were swallowed up on that huge plain, as many who tried to find a friend, or even a regiment, sadly discovered. Valcartier was puzzling enough in such a hunt, but simplicity compared to those two hundred square miles of rolling downs, of woods and rushing streams, of sheep-grazing fields and ribbony roads, crossing and intersecting, and often congested with caravans of motor-lorries or groaning traction engines.

Here and there were not only the many camps, but picturesque typical English farms and villages, and stately old mansions amidst their lovely parks, while from many a hilltop appeared the spire of Salisbury's beautiful cathedral, pointing fairy-like, in the misty distance.

Though many little birds had the poor taste to winter here, though bushes, vines and grass stayed green, and even in January ploughs furrowed the fields, yet to the heart-sickening, apparently never-ending fall of rain, how preferable would have been ground-hardening frost and good deep snow, to keep out the cold!

Of course the dominating interest of the Plain is Stonehenge—that relic of prehistoric days, and deeds as dark as are the Germans'. Our men were never tired of examining the ruins or speculating over

the barrows and "rings" and traces of earthworks left by ancient Britons and Romans. Some antiquarian among them started a theory, which obtained popular credence, that the object of Stonehenge's lofty pillars and cross slabs was to provide a place where the Druid priests might sit during services and keep their feet out of the mud. Be that as it may, a significant sight last winter was the Church parade of Earth's latest khaki-covered soldiers held by Canon Scott, amid those ponderous ruins, where in bygone ages other religions once held sway and other warriors worshipped. And what more significant sound than the gushing song of the ever-present little larks mingling with the drone of an aeroplane from the military flying school at Netheravon!

Significant, too, of the difference 'twixt Old-World ways and New was an amusing incident which occurred to a Montreal regiment the morning of their arrival. To men, many of whom had roamed trackless forests and been as free as the wild creatures therein, the sacredness of an English tree was news. Therefore great was the horror and indignation of the owner when a number of chaps, equipped with axes, sallied joyously forth to a near-by grove and proceeded to chop down firewood, as had always been their custom in first making camp. Right there and then they learned the force of the proverb about other men and other customs.

There were 50,000 men on the Plain, for a part of "Kitchener's Army" trained there too. The Canadians were some under canvas and some in huts. Bulford, Larkhill, Sling Plantation and Tidworth, are big camps of permanent buildings; there were others of tents like Bustard, West Down South, West Down North, and Pond Farm. In addition, our men were billeted at Shrewton, Tilshead, Devizes, Edington, Potterne, Upavon, Netheravon, Pewsey, Winterbournestoke, Figheldean, and Woodford. At Bulford Manor, Netheravon and Lavington were large hospitals, besides those purely regimental, and the Field Ambulances; Headquarters and General Alderson were at Bustard in an old inn. But the Plain swallowed up all, and one could speed along for miles in motors or on the light railway from the city of Salisbury to Bulford and see never a sign of a camp and hardly a soldier, save at the stations. Like Valcartier's, they were always lively and crowded with boxes and bales, vehicles, munitions and men.

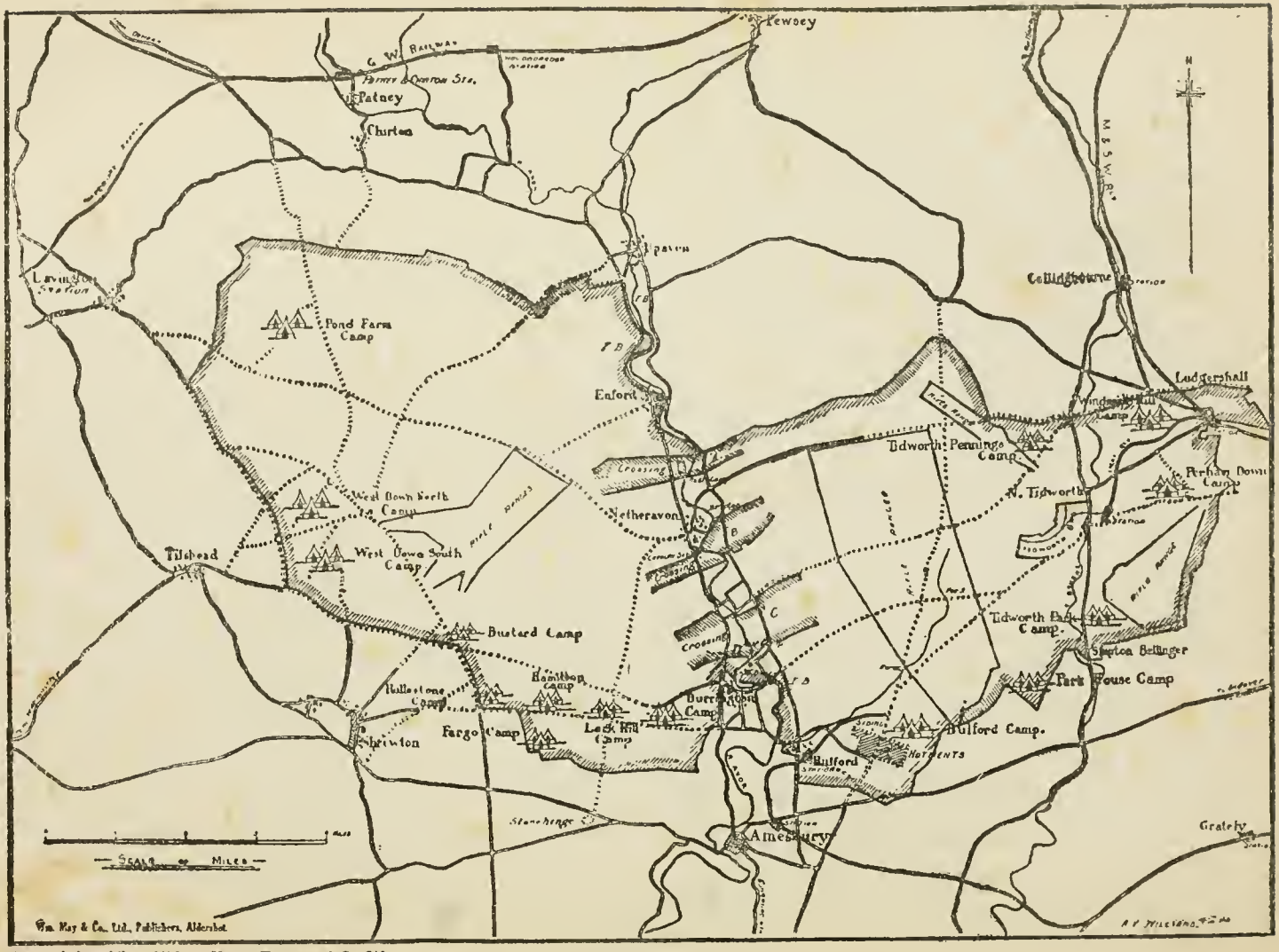
Marching from Portsmouth or landed from trains, at this and that station, at all hours of the day and night; to these huts in the making, and canvas cities that were to be, blithely came our lads. And there they stayed for weary months of the rainiest, most flooded winter, England has known in years. With roads oft-times impassable from mud and water, with sickness bred of exposure and damp, with

their home mails going astray, often overcrowded in huts or tents, yet they never lost their cheerfulness and courage. They made the most of what fun was to be had; what work they could do they did; their only deep complaint was that they were not at the great, fierce work which they came for.

Twice the King reviewed them: soon after their arrival and again early in February, shortly before they left for the front. That time the word went forth—the Canadians had done well: they were ready for the fiery trial, and on the 6th began the move to France by way of Bristol and St. Nazaire.

But not all shall fight the good fight. Under pathetic little mounds by the grey old churches of Netheravon and Bulford lie some of our heroes. Theirs not to give their lives on the field of glory 'midst bursting shell and whistling bullet, like many a brave friend and comrade. But though dying through accident or disease, yet nevertheless it was for their country and in the path of duty. For not only those who achieve honour and distinction, who have "gone West" or suffered the martyrdom of wounds, have made the "Great Sacrifice"; but all who give themselves to fight and to strive, that Liberty and Empire be preserved and Canada remain inviolate.

"Living and dead, their brave hands garland thee
With love and honour, an unfading crown,
A goodly heirloom to be handed down
To children's children that are yet to be."



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SALISBURY PLAIN

DIGGING TRENCHES—SALISBURY PLAIN.

STONEHENGE—SALISBURY PLAIN.

CANADIAN ENGINEERS BUILDING STABLES AT LARKHILL—SALISBURY PLAIN.

Photo by A. F. Marett, Shrewton.

WEST DOWN SOUTH CAMP—
SALISBURY PLAIN.

CHURCHYARD AT NETHERAVON-
SALISBURY PLAIN.

HUTS AT LARKHILL—SALISBURY
PLAIN.

REVIEW BY H.M. THE KING—SALISBURY PLAIN.

SURGEON-GENERAL G. CARLETON JONES, D.M.S.,
CANADIANS.

MUD

On this thick and chalky loam,
Where'er the eye may roam,
The brutal truth comes home—
Of the mud.

It is said the great god Buddh
Is "an idol made of mud";
You could make a million gods
Of what once was grassy sods—
But is mud.

The ancient homes of Britons were of mud,
And one need not of reflection chew the cud
To quickly understand
They took what was next to hand
As they dotted all the land
With homes of mud.

In the morn when we arise
There are but the rainy skies—
And the mud
Nine inches deep it lies,
We are mud up to our eyes,
In our cakes and in our pies
There is mud.

Our soldiers like to stroll
In the mud,
And the horses love to roll
In the mud;
Our good Canadian shoe
It goes quickly through and through,
Peels the sole and melts the glue—
In the mud.

This ditty I have written
In the mud,
For wherever I've been sittin'
There is mud :
It has covered every spot,
On my hands there's quite a lot.
When I'm dead, oh, plant me not
In the mud !

G. M. A.

SALISBURY PLAIN

To tell of Salisbury Plain and our boys camped thereon, is to tell a tale of hardship and discomfort not only bravely but cheerily borne; of men who came full of keen courage and anxiety to learn all they could of soldiering before facing their well-trained foe, and who, despite weather and many other hindrances, must have fully learned their lesson, as shown by their magnificent behaviour at the second battle of Ypres.

Salisbury Plain is a vast sea of land—miles in extent. The camps were widely separated; Pond Farm, the outermost of the first lot of camps, being eight miles from Bustard, where General Alderson had his headquarters, and where the First Brigade were encamped. This Brigade stayed under canvas until they moved to France; but in January the 2nd and 3rd Brigades moved from their tents in the awful mudhole called West Down South to the huts at Lark Hill. Here the mud was, if anything, worse. In the meantime the Artillery, who had had a very bad time at West Down North, moved into billets at various small towns surrounding Devizes, and the Cavalry were billeted at Winterbournestoke and Pewsey.

The Field Comforts Depot was established at Amesbury, which is on the way from most of the camps to Salisbury. Of course England has never known such a winter as the past one. One could count the sunny days on one's two hands. We knew the camps very well, as many a day was spent by one or other of us on a transport, dashing along the awful roads through the mud and rain to deliver much-wanted socks or boxes, or parcels sent from home. We can never say enough for the kindness and courtesy we received always and everywhere from all ranks, and their warm appreciation of our efforts on their behalf was most encouraging.

During the floods in January the roads were almost impassable, and I must in this connection tell you of our wonderful nurses. Every one knows of our sadly-full hospital at Bulford, overflowing into many tents. Here these devoted sisters were to be seen, skirts tucked up, wading round in mud and water to the top of—and sometimes over—their rubber boots, always with a bright smile and a kind word for their

patients. To hear the men who have been in hospital speak of " our Sisters " with such unbounded admiration and respect is delightful.

This is no military description of the camp, but just a few items of the woman side of life there. During January a London friend, who is untiring in her work for the Empire's soldiers, wrote asking the Commission if a concert party to give four concerts would be appreciated by the Canadians if she should send them. Her kind offer was, of course, jumped at; and never, I think, have performers had more enthusiastic or appreciative audiences. Four ladies came down, and we can only hope their reception repaid them for their kindness. Two concerts were held at Netheravon Hospital in the afternoon and two at Lark Hill camp in the evening. Those big huts, packed with a thousand men, were a wonderful sight. We were sorry there were only two evening concerts, so only two units benefited. One, a Western regiment, deserves a special word for their wonderful staging and lighting arrangements, not to mention their decorations. At the last moment the violinist's music-stand was missing, and in literally five minutes the neatest and most practical stand had been made by the regimental carpenter.

The poor horses were the worst sufferers, as they for the most part had no shelter from the awful weather until the end of January, and many a man was found actually crying over his poor gee.

The Y.M.C.A. work for the men cannot be praised too highly. What the camps would have done without their efforts to help and amuse the men during their free hours, I do not know.

On February 6th the Division began its move to France. Of course it rained all those days—or rather nights, for they moved at night—but nothing could dampen the spirits of the men. As they passed the Vicarage (our Depot), marching through Amesbury to the station, they sang and cheered, and always came the cry :

" Are we downhearted ?—No. Are we wet ?—Yes." And in those few words are epitomised the main points of the winter's history.

J. L. A.

DINNER—AT THE FRONT.

FILLING SANDBAGS—AT THE FRONT.

LOVELY WARM FUR COATS —AT THE FRONT.

IN A DUGOUT—AT THE FRONT.

A QUIET READ—AT THE FRONT.

NEWS FROM HOME—AT THE FRONT.

AFTER A JACK JOHNSON—AT THE FRONT.

IN BILLETS—AT THE FRONT.

QUARTERS IN FRANCE—AT THE FRONT.

"SOME" SANDBAGS—AT THE FRONT.

STABLES—AT THE FRONT.

A DISUSED TRENCH—AT THE FRONT.

THE MORNING SHAVE—
AT THE FRONT.

A HOME FROM HOME—AT THE FRONT.

A TRENCH TOILET—AT THE FRONT.

KING EDWARD HORSE, ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOONS AND LORD STRATHCONA HORSE—MARESFIELD, SUSSEX.

CANADIAN CAVALRY BRIGADE SPORTS—
MARESFIELD, SUSSEX.

Photo by A. F. Marett, Shrewton.

THE FLOODS AT SHREWTON—SALISBURY PLAIN.

TRANSPORTS PASSING THROUGH AMESBURY—
SALISBURY PLAIN.

WARD IN BULFORD MANOR—SALISBURY PLAIN.

FIELD COMFORTS DEPOT, THE VICARAGE, AMESBURY — SALISBURY PLAIN.

NO. 1 GENERAL HOSPITAL, CAVALRY SCHOOL, NETHERAVON—SALISBURY PLAIN.

OUT FOR A STROLL—SALISBURY PLAIN.

THE FLOODS AT BULFORD MANOR—SALISBURY PLAIN.

ARE WE DOWNHEARTED?—SALISBURY PLAIN.

THE KING'S "GODSPEED"

TEXT OF HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE TO THE CANADIANS

FOLLOWING an inspection of the Canadian First Contingent on February 4th, on Salisbury Plain, His Majesty the King wrote a gracious message to the troops, to be read to all units on board ship after their embarkation for France. It is as follows:

"OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN:

"At the beginning of November I had the pleasure of welcoming to the Mother Country this fine contingent from the Dominion of Canada, and now, after three months' training, I bid you Godspeed on your way to assist my Army in the field.

"I am well aware of the discomforts that you have experienced from the inclement weather and abnormal rain, and I admire the cheerful spirit displayed by all ranks in facing and overcoming all difficulties.

"From all I have heard, and from what I have been able to see at to-day's inspection and march-past, I am satisfied that you have made good use of the time spent on Salisbury Plain.

"By your willing and prompt rally to our common flag, you have already earned the gratitude of the Motherland.

"By your deeds and achievements on the field of battle I am confident that you will emulate the example of your fellow-countrymen in the South African War, and thus help to secure the triumph of our arms.

"I shall follow with pride and interest all your movements. I pray that God may bless you and watch over you."

THE LADS OF THE MAPLE LEAF

By Jessie Pope

Ripe for any adventure, sturdy, loyal, and game,
Quick to the call of the Mother, the young Canadians came.
Eager to show their mettle, ready to shed their blood,
They bowed their neck to the collar and trained in Wiltshire mud.

Shipped, in the fullness of time, across to the other shore,
Heard a deep hum in the distance, the *basso profundo* of war;
Fretted to get to the business, chafed for the firing line.
Forward—with throbbing pulses, like pilgrims who near their shrine.

Spoiled for a fight, and got it—lurid, merciless, red—
Trifled with death in the trenches, braved and battled and bled.
Then, at a given order, gathered together and backed—
Not because *they* were bending, but to keep the line intact.

Four of their guns defenceless—left in the enemy's hand!
That was a bitter buffet, more than the lads could stand.
Back charged the Men of the Maple, routed the jubilant Huns,
Captured a pack of Germans and saved their belovéd guns.

Ripe for any adventure, sturdy, loyal, and game,
Quick to the call of the Mother, the keen Canadians came.
Hurrah for the young Dominion! Cheer them with heart and voice.
The Maple shall never wither! Bravo—Canada boys!

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LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

THROUGH A STORM IN A CATTLE BOAT

February 18th, 1915.

JUST a few lines to let you know that I am quite all right and feeling just as fit as ever. We are billeted "somewhere in France." I can't tell you where we are, where we have been, or where we are going, as we have had strict instructions not to do so, and if I did the names would only be obliterated by the Censor. We had an awfully rough passage by sea. You can imagine what it was like, with the boat travelling very light, practically nothing in the hold, and practically three-quarters of the men ill.

Those who were left had to look after the horses, as they were very frightened. We were in a cattle boat, with no bunks and no room for such a crowd on deck, so all the fellows gathered in the hold, where they slept and stayed. The first night four of us slept on deck, and it was all right. The next night we found a place in an extra hold. That was the night that the storm came up, and we were sleeping right under the hatch. The water came through like a deluge, and "drowned" us. We moved our bed three times that night before we could find anywhere dry. In the morning I got up, and I have never seen or realised such a sea in all my life. It just tossed the boat about like a bottle; but we got through all right. Ours was the only boat out of our Brigade to get through the storm—all the others ran with the gale, and got in after us, although they started some time before. We got off and entrained in the evening. Our platoon travelled apart from the Battalion, as we were escort to a battery of Artillery. We had four box cars, exactly like covered goods trucks, only very much larger, and there were twenty to twenty-five in each. We all enjoyed the railway journey, as we were treated well all the way through. We lived ever since we left England on bully beef, biscuits, bread, jam, and cheese—all right for land but no good for sea. We had a great time getting off at the stations and singing to the crowds which gathered at every place all the way through. They couldn't understand what

we were singing about, but they clapped just the same, and gave us apples, pears, onions, cider, wine, and all sorts of things. Wine is very cheap here, and you can get a quart bottle for a franc—viz., a shilling. The weather coming through was fine, and we travelled very slowly. When we landed we were served out with lovely warm fur coats, and they are quite a boon to us, and will be yet. We slept very warm in the train. We passed through lots of the big French towns, which I can't mention, and yesterday we arrived at where we detrained, and walked about two or three miles to where we are billeted now, in the bottom floor of a flour mill.

We don't know when we are going in the trenches, but have seen lots of fellows who have just come out, and it is very quiet there now. The place we are in now the Germans were in at one time, but were cleared out. We are quite all right here, and our men are the best every time, as the paper says.

All the way along the French people were asking for "the souvenir, souvenir," so we gave them any old buttons we had. I managed to make them understand by the little French I remembered and learnt up in the book you sent, and got along all right in that respect; but up here they speak Flemish, so we are "done in."

Kindest regards to all the people.

SOMETHING QUITE NEW

Monday, March 1st.

This is something quite new, writing a letter in the trenches. We paraded at 5 p.m., marched to the edge of the town, where we waited till 6.15, when it was getting dark, and guides met us and brought us up to the trenches. As I said this afternoon, these are *de luxe*; the officers we are with had me in to dinner with them. We had bully beef and potatoes, welsh rabbit, cake, jam, bread, butter, whisky, and coffee, with cherry brandy and cigarettes to follow. Then we went round the sentries to see all was well, and now I am in my own bedroom. It is a dug-out on a side trench, about six feet square and about four feet high. Opposite the door is the bed—canvas on a frame two feet from the ground, with straw pillow; beside it a box for a table, with a magazine and weekly paper, with a candle burning; and beside the door a fireplace made of a biscuit tin and burning charcoal. Over it are two pictures from an illustrated paper. The carpet is empty sand-bags, the sides are boards with mud outside them, roof corrugated iron with earth on

top. They dig a space out, put in the wooden props and sides, put corrugated iron on top and fill in the top, etc., with earth, hang a bit of canvas or rubber sheeting on top; and who could be happier?

There was some excitement this morning when two German Taubes flew over the edge of the town and our guns started to shell them. They were a long way up, but you could plainly see the shells bursting, and some of them seemed to be pretty close.

Then this afternoon the Germans started shelling the town near our billets; several shells fell near the Company School. Also some fell on the stable right next to where my horse is, smashed the roof, and broke all the windows; but it is really surprising that with it all so very little damage is done.

FROM OFFICER OF 15TH BATTALION.

STANDING-TO IN THE TRENCHES

Monday, March 8th.

We paraded at 5.30 at our billets, and had a long trying march in pitch black with very bad roads. In some places the water was three inches deep across the road, and we had to pass motor transports, etc. It rained nearly all day, but cleared up by night, but was still very dark and cloudy. When we arrived near the firing line we picked up more stuff, as everyone had to carry 24 hours' grub, coke, kindling, etc. The men were terribly ladened down, but were splendid. We met our guides, and marched down a road and across a ploughed field—you can imagine its state after the rain; had to cross two plank bridges, step over a wire, and at last stumbled into our trench. On getting in every man "stands-to," that is, stands up at the parapet at the place he will fire from, and peers out into the dark where one knows the German lines are. The other company then fell out, our chaps take off their packs, etc., sentries are posted, the men heat some tea in a brazier and try to snuggle into a tiny dug-out. I report to the outgoing C.O., sign for shovels, etc., he is leaving, find out what has been happening, and all the news, and then start my rounds. As we have some detached posts, this means floundering around in the dark in thick mud, speaking to each sentry and seeing that all is well. We had some supper first, then I made my rounds, which took till nearly three o'clock, then turned in for a couple of hours, and then we stood-to till it was light enough to see all was clear. This brings it to Sunday morning, which was another wet, cheerless day.

After breakfast everyone started in to clean the trenches, pump out water, which in some places was quite deep, and generally settle down. Then we started in to fix up our dug-outs by enlarging them, putting better roofs over them; and we built three new ones. All this time I have to send in written reports on different things at all sorts of different hours, ranging from 3 a.m. Our rations are all carried up by hand from some distance back, and had to be distributed in the dark and sent off to the different places. Then I went round again. The mud behind our right is awful—it is a ploughed field. The old line trench is behind and is chuck-full of water, so that if one does not stick to the line one gets damp. It is now tea-time, and there are five of us waiting for it, so you can imagine the size of the dug-out—it is a regular palace.

FROM OFFICER OF 15TH BATTALION.

THE LUXURY OF A HOT BATH

March 12th.

We got into our billets about 1.30 p.m. yesterday. We had a cup of tea and went off in lots to have a bath. The men's place is just an old factory with about fifty large tubs. They have ample hot water, and every man gets in and has a thorough wash. The tubs are about the size of a washtub, and there is hardly room to get all parts of one's anatomy in at the same time, so as a result every one was trying all sorts of antics to get in, hanging their feet out and screwing round. Then there was a small room for officers. Our tub was a little larger, and oh, the luxury of a very hot bath. I had not had my clothes off for five days, and just wallowed in it. Next there was a huge vat of luke-warm water into which one had to jump from the top, and it was just up to one's neck, and thirdly a vat of cold water the same size. The men all got a clean pair of socks from Queen Mary and the women of the Empire. Another funny thing was a cart some of the men made to take rations, etc., up to the front. They found some old wheels that looked like a perambulator, put a box on top of it, and all sorts of things inside, including two small puppies, pots, pans, and grub, with a French flag on the back. It upset three times, much to the disgust of the puppies, but they only broke one egg, and said it was much easier than carrying everything on their backs. Do you remember the kitten some of the men found at Val-

cartier? It has travelled everywhere with us; one man carries it on top of his pack; it goes into the trenches with him, and seems to enjoy itself and be quite happy.

We did not know what mud was on Salisbury Plain: this is a very flat part of the country, and the water seems to just lie on the roads and fields and never sinks in, also it is very misty to-day, and one can only see about 100 yards, which is hard on both the artillery and the aeroplanes. It is wonderful to see the artillery firing at a flying machine. You see the car sailing along, hear the explosion, and then a puff of black smoke away up in the air. It must be pretty ticklish work. You can follow the course by the shells bursting, and sometimes they bring him down.

From Officer of 15th Battalion.

AN AMUSING DAY

March 17th, 1915.

We have just had rather an amusing day. As you know, we are rather an Irish regiment, and as we have an Irishman in command, the men were convinced that we should make an attack during the day. This did not come off, but the men had to celebrate St. Patrick's Day somehow. They started off by sticking the Irish flag, the Union Jack, and the tricolour on the parapet. Where they conjured them from the Lord only knows! They then sang the National Anthem, the Marseillaise, the Maple Leaf, and Wearing o' the Green. The Germans riddled the tricolour with bullets, but left the other two alone. Our men have found a sure way of annoying the Germans. They shout across to them, and the following remarks are sure to draw a reply in the form of some perfectly ineffective rifle fire. "Hi, Fritz, bring the menu!" or "Herr Lieutenant, why don't you pay your washing bill?" The latter is in some subtle way a particular insult.

From Officer of 90th Winnipeg Rifles.

EVERYTHING IS QUIET

March 21st.

Everything is quiet, though we can hear the Germans pounding away at stakes, probably on new wire entanglements. They send up occasional flares, which make everything very bright while they are up, and there is more or less firing on and off all the time. Going down the trench at night rather reminds me of a Pullman sleeping-car. There are lights inside the dug-outs which shine out of canvas curtains, and there is a narrow passage down the middle. There goes a machine gun popping away; they are making more noise than usual.

The farmers all seem to have their fields in pretty good shape right up close to the firing-line, but, of course, in some places the houses are in ruins; wood all taken for firewood, and even the bricks taken to put down on the floors of the trenches or to improve a bit of road. The other day when we were going to bathe we saw a brush cleaner going along the road, trying to get the mud off, just as one might see at home.

From Officer of 15th Battalion.

Photo by Fisk-Moore, Canterbury.

FORT GARRY HORSE—CANTERBURY.

BRANDING HORSE WITH R.C.H.A. —MARESFIELD, SUSSEX.

A GUN IN ACTION—MARESFIELD, SUSSEX.

ROYAL CANADIAN DRAGOON HORSES—MARESFIELD, SUSSEX.

HIGHLANDERS ENTRAINING — AT THE FRONT

A CONSULTATION—AT THE FRONT.

IN WINTER KIT—AT THE FRONT.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY—AT THE FRONT.

IN THE TRENCHES—AT THE FRONT.

THE SNIPER—AT THE FRONT.

WATCHING FOR THEM—AT THE FRONT.

ON THE RUE DU BOIS

By Frederick George Scott

O pallid Christ within this broken shrine,
Not those torn Hands and not that Heart of Thine
Have given the nations blood to drink like wine.

Through weary years and 'neath the changing skies,
Men turned their back on those appealing Eyes
And scorned as vain Thine awful Sacrifice.

Kings with their armies, children in their play
Have passed unheeding down this shell-ploughed way,
The great world knew not where its true strength lay.

In pomp and luxury, in lust of gold,
In selfish ease, in pleasures manifold,
"Evil is good, good evil," we were told.

Yet here, where nightly the great flare-lights gleam,
And murder stalks triumphant in their beam,
The world has wakened from its empty dream.

At last, O Christ, in this strange, darkened land,
Where ruined homes lie round on every hand,
Life's deeper truths men come to understand.

For lonely graves along the country-side,
Where sleep those brave hearts who for others died,
Tell of life's union with the Crucified.

And new light kindles in the mourner's eyes,
Like day-dawn breaking through the rifted skies,
For Life is born of life's self-sacrifice.

Holy Week, 1915.
Northern France.

THREE DAYS OF OUR WORK

In a Canadian War Hospital,
France,
March, 1915.

It may be of interest to you if I try, however inadequately, to describe three days of our recent work here as the best means of conveying a picture of the conditions to your minds.

This is by no means "the front," and compared to many other sisters, our experiences have been tame, but nevertheless last week echoes of the fierce fighting round La Bassée and the dearly bought success of Neuve Chapelle have connected us very quickly with the battle-line, and human wreckage has been cast up to our doors almost on the next tide.

I am on night duty at present, and on the evening of March 11th a message from Boulogne informed us that a train load of about 250 was being sent on, of which number 84 were bad stretcher cases. The night sisters hurry from room to room of the hotel (which has been converted into a very convenient hospital), making themselves acquainted with patients admitted since morning, doing necessary dressings, and carrying out whatever orders can be done ahead, so that they will be free later. The day staff don rubber aprons and remain on duty to assist in receiving the patients, getting ambulance beds prepared, shirts hung on radiators, and emergency dressings ready. Activity also reigns in the big central kitchen, where gallons of cocoa simmer on the range. All the day orderlies are called up to assist in undressing and bathing patients, while the other men of the Unit assemble at the entrance to carry up stretchers or give a "boch" to others who walk with difficulty. Each story of the building contains about 100 beds in charge of one nurse and three orderlies at night, about ten nurses and six orderlies by day. It is close upon midnight when the ambulances make their first journey from the station, and the unloading

and passing before the Admitting Officer begins. It is a ghastly enough procession, to which we have become accustomed, but the men of the Canadian Corps have won a good name for the speed and care with which they handle the wounded, though each stretcher has to be carried up three stories, and you will remember there are eighty-four helpless cases.

Quietly and silently they file along the corridors, these broken men from the trenches, whose accumulated miseries even we cannot realise. Khaki caked with clay, ragged, dirty, and worn out, they stagger into the warmth and light of the wards; and in the patient droop of the body, the dull retrospective eye, and restrained speech one catches a glimpse of the weeks of horror that followed Mons, the countless nights of slow agony in the vigil underground, and the sudden parting of comrade from comrade in a delirium of noise and blood only a few hours ago. A long line of stretchers fills the hall-ways next, and even here it is the exception to hear a groan or complaint. Bodies are literally shattered, and the journey must have been a terrible one, even in the wonderfully fitted hospital train. At each station we were told some dead had been removed, and cases of gas-gangrene have already developed, and in thirty-six hours are very far advanced.

"How many hours before you were picked up?" asks a sister of one. "Twenty-six, sister, but I dug my head into a refuge, and was only hit once again, thank God."

"How were you wounded?" another is questioned. "It was at the last of their trenches that a big Prussian got me, but it was his last shot," and he shows a helmet with a bayonet thrust cleaving it, which he has treasured all the way from the field. Some of the patients fall instantly into a deep sleep, or rouse themselves only to murmur "This must be heaven!" Another apologises: "I can't sleep, a bed is sort of queer; haven't been near one for eight months; but it *is* good to have a hot bath and clean clothes, mine haven't been off for a month."

All important dressings are cut down and replaced, and those suffering greatly made as comfortable as circumstances permit before the day staff are dismissed. A sergeant makes complete rounds, checking money and valuables, and a detail collects from each ward the muddy and blood-stained clothing to go to the steriliser.

About 3 a.m. one has time to walk from bed to bed and inspect the new patients.

Here is a child of seventeen moaning softly with shattered arm; there lies an old soldier, cigarette alight, declaring cheerily, "It's a bit sore, but it will be all right soon, sure." In one cot there is a lad picked up on the field without a coat, identification disk is absent, no

name or number can be found about him, and a brain injury makes it a question whether he will ever be included in any list but "missing." Over in the corner is a quiet form, for whom a letter home and a summons to the chaplain are the only services we can render.

As a rule these sufferers are silent, but here and there writhing forms and smothered groans tell of agony drugs cannot relieve. Some have limbs reduced to pulp, others have lost an eye, while a few unconscious cases claim close attention. Lifting a sheet perhaps one discovers a hæmorrhage, or reveals a gaping cavity where shrapnel has torn away a joint. A German prisoner looks up from his cot, and receives inquiries with a blank stare, though in an unguarded moment he shows he has learned the language during his sojourn in England as a waiter or otherwise.

An electric light flashed on will make half a dozen patients look up hastily for a flare or the bursting of a shell. And, as one passes along, a voice says: "It's awful quiet here, sister, but I seem to hear the guns yet. There were 500 of ours speaking at once yesterday morning, and it was hell!"

Now and then a sudden cry and convulsive awakening indicates the exhausted nerves of a dreamer. He thought he was stumbling through the mud and thorn bushes—a "Charge," the papers call it—warily, with quick-beating heart, towards the enemy's trench; the alarm is raised, a hail of lead bursts around, the cheer he tries to raise chokes him, in the gloom he is wrestling with the man who may kill him, he feels his bayonet free, he is falling himself into an abyss full of unspeakable horrors, he awakens panting and perspiring, and sitting up staring in front of him, sees again in the dim light of dawn the wet brown field, the colonel's body, his chum's upturned face, the contorted forms thick around him of his regiment, and beyond the hard-won ditches the grey heaps of the German slain. . . .

Just when the new arrivals are finally settled, a list of names is sent up to the wards of those to be transferred to another hospital farther south, owing to the policy of constant evacuation in order to keep vacant beds nearest the front. Many of those to go have been in only a few days, and will be stretcher cases again. This necessitates redressing all wounds, perhaps twenty-five in an hour, and practically putting each article of clothing on the helpless patients. The orderlies waken those known as Class C, "walking cases," and take them to the pack stores to draw their clothing, while the bed-patients have theirs carried up to them.

Breakfasts also have to be served, and the convalescents assist with these. Somehow we "muddle through," and at 8 a.m., when the day staff arrives, the patients are starting off; and though the

entire ward looks like a Belgian town after a bombardment, the essentials are more or less done.

For brevity I must omit the day duties, but you can supply the details of business entailed by the admission of 250 surgical cases in a night. The nursing-sisters do nearly all the dressings, and many minor operations are done in the wards. The next night another convoy comes in filling the beds vacated in the morning, and the same routine is enacted each time. We are rushed like this for several days after a big engagement, but there are periods in between when the wards are almost empty. We sometimes pass thousands through in three days with just sufficient time for a bath, dressing of wounds, a couple of meals, and a few hours' sleep in a clean bed. Gratitude for trifling attention is unbounded, and we have all learned anew to appreciate the wonderful qualities of these very gallant gentlemen in the ranks. The fields of Crecy and Agincourt lie close at hand, Waterloo will be re-won, and the famous regiments now fighting over the same ground where they gained their battle honours in past centuries have proved that the spirit of the British Army survives from age to age.

COMPLIMENTARY TO OUR BUNCH

March 23rd, 1915.

I have to thank you very much for the lavish amount of "good cheer" that greeted us all when we came out last night, from a five-day tour in the trenches. Quantity was not the only thing, quality was a good second. Between this, that, and "t'other" from personal friends, we are faring very well, so far as the necessities of life go. I rather imagine it is rather useless my giving you a detail of our experience since landing, as no doubt you will have had it already from so many correspondents. I may say that the daily mail hour is one that is looked forward to with unmitigated pleasure. Of course you know that we were inspected by General French shortly after we arrived, and that he was more than complimentary to our bunch, and harked back to when he inspected these fellows in Sewell Camp, five years ago. Then we took the trenches with the regulars for a week, were detailed back to our billets, but at a moment's notice we marched "*here*" and our Canadian Division relieved the "——" Division, regulars, and we took on our own line. Our particular line is 1,100 yards long—pretty long. If you look in the *Illustrated London News* of February 20th,

pages 236 and 250, you will see four photos of our particular lines—they look beautifully clean in a photo! The Headquarters is in a "dug-out" just in rear of this wall. We have all had more or less varied experiences with rifle and shell fire. They always give us some attention daily with shell (H.E.) or shrapnel. We have only had twenty-one casualties in my lot since we landed, which is about the average run per battalion. We were in the recent heavy fighting, but our chance did not mature, and we never left the trenches, but all the same did what was required. I hear marvellous tales of Lark Hill, and also the superiority of the 2nd Contingent. Are they really true? One never sees *any one* to talk to here. I wonder what it would feel like to be turned loose in the "Old Town" to-night. I don't think I should know how to "carry on." We are all in A1 spirits and the men very keen.

FROM OFFICER OF 5TH BATTALION.

A TICKLISH JOB

"IN THE DUG-OUT." AT THE FRONT,
March 23*rd*, 1915.

Many thanks for your letter of 14th inst. and for the parcel.

We have been enjoying the many good things in the latter very much, and the men passed you a hearty vote of thanks. I don't know whether I told you that the company officers all stay with the companies both in the trenches and in billets, and have their own messes. The Q.M., Transport O.C., Paymaster, and Padre stay at what we call the heavy base about two miles in rear, rations being brought up at night and within about 800 yards from where everything is carried into the trenches. We came back in last night after having been out for five days. This came about by reason of our changing from a three to a four days' relief and the other battalions had to stay on another day, so that we would not be relieving on the same night as the third brigade, as we both use some of the same roads and in the dark a good deal of confusion ensued. Now we have orders to pull out altogether. One of the divisions which was in the Neuve Chapelle show is coming up to take over. We don't know definitely where we are going, but I have no doubt we are to be used in the next attack wherever that may be. I don't quite know if I am sorry to leave here or not. We have done so much work on these trenches and improved them to such an extent that

some of the men naturally feel they would like to get the benefit of their work. As there is a bit of a moon, it was quite decent going round the trenches last night during tour of inspection. When we were here before it was so pitch dark that it was not at all pleasant. First of all there is a large field to cross, and as there are any amount of J. J. holes it was a ticklish job. These holes are full of water and while baths are at a premium while we are in the trenches, one does not want to fall headlong into a J. J. hole. In the trenches themselves one has to look out, as there is lots of water under the narrow planks which have now been put down, and a false step means you go over the top of your gum boots in water which does not smell exactly like eau-de-cologne. The company officers have pretty comfortable dug-outs in the trenches, and always seem to have plenty to eat and drink. It does not sound very exciting, does it? The main feature, I think, is the weirdness at night. Every one is on the go. Working parties out in front fixing the wire, others inside working at the parapet, and so forth. Fatigue parties bringing in rations and fuel, and listening posts and patrols coming in reporting if there is any movement in the enemy's trenches. We come back from the right along a road running parallel to the trench, and only a short distance behind it, consequently the bullets come cracking over, but it is not "aimed" fire, and as all the fatigue parties for the right section go along it, and no one has been hit, we regard it as pretty safe.

From Officer of 1st B.C.'s (7th Battalion).

"WE NO SHOOT, YOU NO SHOOT"

March 24th, 1915.

I was glad to get the news about the battalions in England. We have heard all sorts of rumours here—how 4,000 of them had been diverted and were on their way to Egypt; how they were simply reinforcements for this Division here, and sundry other destinations for them. I am glad to know they are such a fine lot of men; the Army here needs them, for it is not the Army it was last August. You will be glad to know that every day the officers of the Army are referring to the Canadians in kinder words, and our reception here has always been of the happiest kind. You will remember—for who could ever forget?—what they used to say about us in England, about our discipline,

our this and our that, until one wondered if we had any friends in the country. That reputation preceded us here, I know, but in less than a week all was changed, and on more than one occasion I have heard Staff Officers say, "I wish to God we had a few more like the Canadians." We were on arrival put in the trenches with British troops. That was to go on for a week and then we were to be taken back to some place for further training, but before the week was out that programme was changed, and we immediately took over a section of the line all by ourselves. At the end of this week we will have five weeks of trenches and we are turning over to another Division (one which has been here from the beginning almost) and going for a few days' rest. The Brigadier of that Division told us to-day, after he had been through our trenches, that they were by far the best trenches he had seen over here. That will give you some idea of how hard these boys have worked and with what success. I know you won't think this bragging, and I am only telling it because I know how keenly interested you are. Things with us have been very, very quiet this last week. We thought at one time it might be just the reverse. Our friends opposite are almost rude—they cut us dead; ignore us. We try to get a rise out of them, but no, they won't answer. When we first came their snipers were very active, but whether it is because they don't want to shoot or because we give them six shots for every one they fire us, things are different now. They have a sense of humour, though; one day they stuck up on the parapet a wooden horse such as a child might play with. Our chaps shot it down; they put it up again with a bandage round its neck, and one round a hind leg. They call out at times such things as, "We no shoot, you no shoot." "We are Saxons and you are Anglo-Saxons." "If you come half-way we'll give you cigarettes." "Hello, B. C., how would you like to be walking down Hastings Street?" They seemed to know and apparently did know exactly when we took over. Their system of espionage is perfect. Of course when we came we took up very actively the detection of spies. For a time every one was suspicious, and reports were constantly coming in of lights that looked like signalling. We ran a great many of these reports to earth, and many amusing explanations of these lights was the result. In one instance one of our officers went out by himself one evening to watch: soon he espied a suspicious light—signalling was surely going on. He stalked it, fell over fences, ditches, into "J. J." holes, until he was a pretty sight, wringing wet and covered with mud. His enthusiasm was in no way dampened, and get to that light or die was his determination. Visions of catching the traitor in the very act, alone and unaided, crossed his mind. He looked again; the signalling surely going on. At last he got to the house, crawled in a window, stealthily climbed the creaking

stair, drew his trusty gun, burst in the room from which came the light. What met his disappointed eye was one of his own men sewing a much-needed patch on the seat of his trousers, the passing of his hand and arm before the light, as he laboriously stitched, making intermittent flashes of light mistaken for signalling. Another light run to earth disclosed four medicos having a quiet game of draw. Then we had all sorts of tales of sniping behind the lines—that is, some contended that German spies were behind our lines and were shooting at our men going up and down at night. Of course we investigated this as best we could, and the more we investigated the more stories were told of men being sniped at. I never believed the yarns, as I had been up and down many nights and no suspicious shots ever came over. Still, many believed the stories and every one was on the *qui vive.*

Well, one night we sent a test measure to the artillery. One battery in our area let drive each gun immediately after the other just like rapid fire. On the road within 100 yards of this battery was coming along a gallant machine gun officer and his section. They did not know the artillery were about to fire—time was about 10 p.m. when snipers were most busy—so when the battery let loose this detachment was very much startled. The officer drew his revolver and stepped back on the top of the sergeant, who had thrown himself flat on the road, tripped over the body, and rolled head over heels into a well-filled ditch. The men are so light-hearted and cheerful—full of life and ginger. Somebody is going to be badly hurt when these boys are let loose.

BACK TO CIVILISATION

March 26th, 1915.

Thanks for papers which I received this morning, including *Despatch* with account of Neuve Chapelle. I must read that by and by; we get very little news over here unless we happen to get hold of a paper now and again. The day that scrap was on our fellows were holding their line, and we were standing to with equipment on all day. We didn't have a lot to do, as the advance didn't reach as far as us, but our artillery were in it. We came out of the trenches last night after three days in. We are back for a longer rest this time, as the Regulars have relieved us at our old place in the trenches. We had about six or seven miles to walk to this town, where we are billeted now —quite a nice place and about the biggest town we have stopped at on

this side. The place lies just behind that place where the battle took place a week or so back. We didn't have a very exciting time on this occasion, and, therefore, there is very little to tell you. The night we went in it simply poured with rain all the way, and we got in practically wet through. About half-way up we got to that stage when we didn't care what happened. We were guarding some forts just behind the firing line, so there was very little to do. It rained on and off pretty well all the time we were in, so we didn't get a chance to dry our clothes until the last day, but I haven't made my cold any worse. The billets we left were shelled the day after we had gone to the trenches ; this is the first time that has happened. There were a couple of fellows hit, I believe. We shall have a chance of fattening ourselves up now we are back to civilisation, and we have started well to-day with three boiled eggs apiece this morning and steak and eggs for supper to-night. It has been snowing to-day, and very cold. I was hoping that the cold had cleared away, and it was fine and warm yesterday.

BILLETED OVER AN ESTAMINET

March 31st, 1915.

Just a few lines to let you know that I am still fit and all that. We are still " resting." They work us a good deal harder when we're " resting " than they do when we are working, as the Irishman would say. We have about the same routine each day—physical drill, skirmishing, trench-digging, etc., for three hours in the morning, and route marching in the afternoon. We walked a good twelve miles this afternoon, and I feel pretty tired. We had a good bath on Monday—the first real hot bath for about two months, and we didn't half enjoy it. The biggest trouble was to get us out. We are billeted over an Estaminet—that's a kind of coffee-house—and the old lady treats us all and looks after us like her own boys ; she gives us coffee before breakfast, and soup at noon, and cooks any stuff we want cooked. I like the people around here much better than the Flemish people we have met nearer the firing line. The band played the " Retreat " to-night—the first time I've heard it since we left the Plain. We had a little " sing-song " down below to-night—lots of the Regulars and some of our boys. There were four artillerymen who have been over here seven months, and to-night was the first time they have been in a decent-sized town,

and then they came in without permission, so they'll be in for it when they get back. We have just finished the cake to-night, but the muscatels and almonds, sweets, etc., are still going strong. We can't have a feed outside because we're all "broke," and don't know when we shall be paid again; in a day or so, I guess. The weather is still fine over here, cold, but dry lately.

ANGELS VERY THOROUGHLY DISGUISED

April 4th, 1915.

It is a long way now to Amesbury and your big sitting-room, and I have often wondered where you are. Since coming across we are living in Company messes. I am of course in the Headquarters Mess, and so do not see so much of our officers as we used to at Lark Hill. We have been billeted most of the time in farm-houses, and the regiment is scattered over a mile or two in each place. We are quite comfortable as a rule, and do not lack for much, though, of course, the feminine element which makes life possible is rather lacking. The French of this part are mostly mixed with Flemish and do not possess to a noticeable degree the airs and graces which we usually associate with this land. However, they are kind, hospitable, and forbearing to a degree, when one considers that for months they have entertained angels very thoroughly disguised. They are frugal and sell us eggs, milk, and bread at more than Front prices, but it is better for the men to spend their francs that way than in beershops. In the largest towns one finds real croissons and gateaux that remind one of Paris, but most of the shops are closed, and black is the prevailing colour of Easter millinery.

Our regiment has, thanks to the Bon Dieu, been very fortunate, only two men killed and a dozen or so wounded, so my work has not been heavy. They did their work in the trenches like veterans, and owe to their steadiness under fire the small losses they have sustained. We have not yet been in an attack, when we do the tale will be longer.

The weather here is warm now, and spring has come; the men are discarding their woollen scarves and belts, and I do not think that they will need so much knitting again. They are well supplied with most things, and we owe to your kind thoughts a supply of fine cigarettes.

There is one thing which I believe would be most acceptable and would not be expensive, and that is a supply of reading material in the

form of old magazines or cheap paper-covered books of all kinds. The men in these regiments are in many cases accustomed to reading, and in billets in the long evenings coming, and in the trenches, they have a great deal of spare time, and I know welcome a book on the rare occasions when it can be got. They are passed around till they are worn out. Some packets of cheap playing cards would be welcomed too. The cheaper the books, etc., are, the better, for we move often, and such things cannot be added to the already too heavy packs. I know how anxious you both are to find out what is most needed.

From an M. O.

A QUAINT OLD TOWN ON THE BORDER

Headquarters—Infantry Brigade,
1st Canadian Division,
British Expeditionary Force.
April 8th, 1915.

Our office is in a fine large house where we occupy by far the finest rooms we have ever had. We have our mess in the same building, but only the Brigadier and the Brigade Major have rooms there, the rest of us are billeted about the village.

I have a room all to myself, and everything is very clean and comfortable. All the natives here speak French only, of course, and their idea of furnishing a room is to get as many chairs into it as possible. My room, though small, possesses no less than nine. I have also a bed with lace curtains, a washstand with toilet set, a chest of drawers apparently filled with female attire, a mirror, and numerous religious images under glass covers. My windows have lace curtains and good blinds, and my floor has a strip of matting and two of carpet.

This is a rather quaint old town just on the border of Belgium. Some of our battalions are billeted in Belgium and only one, the 5th, in the town. As I censor my own letters, I might of course tell you the name of the town; but that would not be playing the game. I understand we are to move into Belgium in a few days, and take up another line of our own; the other brigades going into the trenches, and we going in reserve.

When I arrived here the Brigadier was surprised to see me, for he had no idea a staff officer was being sent. Perhaps I shall soon be sent back to the Depot; but I hope to see some of the fighting first anyway. As it is I have nothing to do whatever; but, of course, I

shall keep myself busy studying the general situation, and helping out as much as I can.

The weather is fine and warm here. It rained hard all last night, but is fine to-day except for a shower this afternoon. Farming is going on here just as usual. We are about fifteen miles from the fighting and I haven't heard a gun yet. Everything is done in a most leisurely fashion, and everybody seems as comfortable as you can imagine.

This morning General Alderson inspected each battalion of this brigade in its billeting area. I was told off to accompany him, and rode a borrowed horse. Our billets extend along a main paved highway for about three or four miles, and the men are certainly far more comfortable than they have ever been since we went to Valcartier. Every one seems highly contented, and the brigade looks to be in good shape.

I got back here at 2.30 p.m., and had lunch, and then went out to see the Grenadiers practising throwing hand grenades. I have just returned from there. These grenades can be thrown into a trench very accurately up to thirty or forty yards, and make a tremendous explosion when they hit. Some of them are exploded by fuses and some by percussion. They are principally used to throw at an advancing enemy and also to clear a trench, when you have taken part of it, by throwing grenades from traverse to traverse. They are so powerful that a few of them thrown into a trench pretty well demolish it.

Mind you, I have just learned that this is the town where the original Valenciennes lace is made, and the curtains in my room would be worth hundreds of dollars in England or Canada. It can be bought quite cheaply here, I believe. The old women make it all by hand. They use about fifty bobbins at one time, and the way they shoot them back and forth is simply miraculous.

We get up here about 7 o'clock and breakfast at 8. This morning for breakfast we had porridge, ham and eggs, bread and jam, toast and tea, served on a snowy cloth in perfectly clean dishes. Our cook is a wonder, he makes everything so good. Of course, I was very late for lunch; but he dished me up a nice plate of soup, some cold ham with potatoes and baked beans, and a bottle of light wine; after which he brought on some most delicious pastry, fruit fritters, fruit cake, cheese and tea, so I really managed, by eating a good deal of bread and butter, to make a fairly good meal.

From a high hill a few miles from here, they say almost all the fighting line can be seen. I must go up to-morrow and have a look.

Now I must stop and get washed up for dinner. We dine—real dinner, mark you—at 7 o'clock and get to bed early, as there is nothing to do in the evenings.

AMIDST THE TURMOIL

HEADQUARTERS,
— CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.
April 15th, 1915.

We are in the midst of an artillery battle just now, and I am at Brigade Report Centre with several French batteries in action in my immediate vicinity, so you need not be surprised if my letter is somewhat disconnected. However, our Report Centre is not being shelled this afternoon, so I am quite safe amidst the turmoil. The 7th Brigade, though, is being severely handled, and have had nine casualties so far to-day, nearly all from shrapnel.

We left our billets yesterday at 10 a.m. to come here, and got the battalions into the trenches at 12.30 at night, having only one man killed and three wounded in the process. We came in 'buses about nine miles, and marched another seven miles to our position. The last three miles had to be made during total darkness, while the enemy searched for us with shrapnel, so at times it looked as though some one might get hurt, but we got on all right.

Our Brigade Headquarters is about three and a half miles from the firing line, and so is almost quite safe; it is located in a house on the outskirts of a small village. I rode back there to sleep last night, and had a room and bed all to myself, and so was quite comfortable. From my windows I could see shell bursting about in the darkness, while the firing line was made most conspicuous by the flares continually sent up by the enemy and the search-lights constantly looking for air-craft. Rifle fire was continuous all night, but no bullets came our way.

To-day I came down to the Brigade Report Centre and shall remain here instead of at Brigade Headquarters.

The Report Centre is really the most interesting place to be. Here we handle only the details of the fighting, while administrative arrangements are all made at Brigade Headquarters. I am about a mile from the trenches here, and so within easy range of the enemy's guns, but we don't allow people to wander about our house, and so the Germans don't know where we are. The Report Centre is in the remains of a farmhouse. There are two mattresses in it, and it is fairly comfortable. The signalling section is here, and we have a cook and a cow. Our grub has to be brought to us at night, so as not to give us away to the enemy. All communication with the outside world is by telephone, with which we are well provided.

This is the nearest to war conditions I have got yet, but still I am really very comfortable. I had to go without supper last night and

breakfast this morning, but I had a good lunch of beef steak and potatoes and baked beans to-day. Yesterday at noon I was halted in a little Belgian town. I bought a goodly pork chop and carried it to a "Werberg," where I had it cooked with French fried potatoes. I made an excellent meal of it, which lasted me until noon to-day. I managed the transport and supply of the move yesterday, and, though I succeeded in getting ammunition, blankets, and supplies to the troops in the trenches, I clean forgot to keep even a sandwich for myself. I shan't make that mistake again.

Word has just come in that we are to expect an attack to-night, so I must see about getting bombs, ammunition, and supplies into the trenches. It is now 6 p.m., but we can't approach the trenches until dark. The guns are still at it. The house next to this was nearly hit by a high-explosive shell just now.

GERMAN TRENCHES ON THREE SIDES

HEADQUARTERS,
— CANADIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE,
April 16th, 1915.

We are on a long salient here, near the apex, with German trenches on three sides of us ; so we have a pretty jolly time both day and night. Last night we got it fairly hot, being subjected to pretty heavy shell fire all afternoon and all night. Reports of casualties are not complete yet, but so far as I can find out by telephoning the trenches, we have lost about six killed and nineteen wounded here so far. Last night we got ready to receive a German attack. Divisional Headquarters notified us that the Germans intended to attack with tubes of poisonous gas ; but it didn't materialise, at any rate not in our sector, though there were considerable rapid fire and lots of flares along the line held by the British troops on our right. During the evening the Germans began bombarding our trenches with heavy trench mortars at close range—from one hundred to two hundred yards—and caused us a lot of annoyance, but didn't do a great deal of damage. They kept it up all night.

To-day is quite normal. The air is quite smoky and not good for artillery observation. Of course, they are blazing away a good deal, but no shell are coming near front centre. We are supported here by

French artillery altogether so far. Our own 18-prs. and howitzers will be along next week.

I had a fairly good sleep last night, actually undressed and went regularly to bed before 1 o'clock. I had to wake up frequently to telephone; but got a good rest just the same. Last night we had a good beef and kidney stew for supper, and this morning porridge, bacon and eggs, toast and marmalade, and tea. We got a good stock of water and rations in last night, and a few bottles of wine, so we are all right.

I wish I could send you some souvenirs, but it is not allowed. I could easily send you a houseful of bayonets, shells, rifles, etc., etc. A gunner of the R.F.A. is buried just outside our door here. His grave is surrounded by a little fence made of empty 18-pr. cartridge cases with 75 mm. at the corners, and bits of shrapnel in designs on the mound.

We met with a heavy loss this morning. Our cow escaped during the night, and has not yet been recovered. Last night, when some of our ammunition mules loaded with bombs and hand grenades were close up to the trenches, a shell exploded near them, and they stampeded over the country. We thought for a while we had lost them; but some of the men succeeded in rounding them up without the loss of a single bomb.

MY FIRST AEROPLANE BATTLE

Eighth Battalion (Winnipeg Little Black Devils),
Somewhere in Belgium,
April 18th, 1915.

I received your letter of April 13th last night. I started in to answer it, but I went into the town to get a few things, and am returning this morning.

We are in billets now after having come out of the trenches for a little rest; we go in again to-morrow night.

Our present billet is a Belgian Château situated on a famous Canal. It has glorious grounds and a beautiful view. The town which we are near has been bashed about very much, and it is a very terrible-looking thing to see houses, public buildings, and churches all a mass of ruins. This has been the centre of a bit of fighting, and to a certain extent still keeps up its reputation. You can appreciate Will Irwin's story of the famous battle when you go over the country in which it took place.

Yesterday I witnessed my first aeroplane battle. All I can say is

that after seeing it I am very sorry that I have not sufficient command of the English language to write a good description of it. It was actually the most thrilling event I have ever seen. Time, 5.30 a.m. Bright spring morning, hardly a breath of air.

1st round.—Two aeroplanes appear—first German, in all probability on a bomb-dropping expedition. The British 'plane beats it over to chase him.

2nd round.—Aeroplanes at a good height circling around each other, each trying to get above the other, and firing at each other. The manœuvring of the machines at this point is simply marvellous, almost beyond description.

3rd round.—The German has apparently had enough and starts to beat for home. Our machine is after him, they are going at a great dip, our machine is gaining and veering off to the left and above him, machines about 100 yards apart. He opens fire again, the German is hit and drops about 100 feet; he regains control. But his engine is not working. From here on this German is giving the finest exhibition of volplaning I have ever seen. He has taken several straight drops, but always somehow or other manages to right himself. At last he has gotten pretty close to the ground, when he turns over: exit one Gerboy, one Taube. One man badly wounded. These Germans certainly deserved a better fate, but the beggars have not done any acts to deserve any sympathy. In the meantime the British 'plane continued on with its job of observing as if nothing had happened. Last night the worst artillery fire I have ever yet heard. It started at 7 p.m. and finished this morning about 7 a.m. I suppose there was an average of fifty shots a minute during that time. Believe me I don't want to be a German under those circumstances. This morning at 5.30 the Gerboys dropped a bomb in our garden—it woke me up. But as I had had only about six hours in three days it did not take me long to go back to sleep again. I do a little grenade throwing in my spare time, and I have charge of the Battalion Grenadiers besides my platoon. As far as danger is concerned this is more or less of a graft, as there are fewer casualties among the Grenadiers than in the companies.

Well, I must close now—remember I have been here two months and have seen a little excitement, and so far it's the Sport of Kings. To look out the window and see the chaps peacefully fishing you would think the war was a hundred miles away.

A SPIDER'S WEB

April 19th, 1915.

Your letter of the 15th came yesterday afternoon. I hope mine get to you regularly. I have a good deal of time to spare here, and so can write every day, though I can only send my letters back by night, on account of the gun fire which never stops day or night, but is naturally less accurate at night. By day the German batteries shell wherever they see any one moving, but of course by night they can only shell our gun emplacements and positions. This afternoon they are amusing themselves by dropping high-explosive shells on a little village about half a mile from my house, to my great glee; for though we have about five hundred men in the village, they take to their dug-outs when the shelling is on. There has been rather more gun fire all round the clock to-day than usual; but no shells have come near here. Of course we have good dug-outs to run into if they should open up on us. In the last twenty-four hours we have had only one man killed and five slightly wounded in the whole brigade. You see we are improving our trenches and breastworks every day, and are gradually cutting down the casualties. The defences were very poor when we took them over from the French.

The British to the south of us made another successful attack last night. It was a repetition of the previous one.

I live in great luxury here. Undress every night and sleep in my pyjamas. Have my hot bath and shave in the mornings. Get up about 7.30 and breakfast at 8.30. Have lunch about 1.30 and dinner about 7.30. Generally get to bed about 11 or 12. I have only had the one trip to the trenches, but expect to make another trip soon. This is a great life, though a Report Centre is very much like a spider's web on account of the vast number of telephone and telegraph wires connecting it with all the units in its area. There have to be separate wires to each unit, because they are frequently cut by shell fire, and they sometimes have to all be in operation at once. Our signalling staff here and at the 'phones of our various units runs to about fifty officers and men, not including messengers.

We are to relieve the battalions in the trenches by putting in the reserve battalions. This means a lot of work, so I shall have to close now.

A TREMENDOUS BATTLE

April 23rd, 1915.

We are in the midst of a tremendous battle. All night long the Canadians have been having a rather bad time, but this morning we got some reinforcements, and are getting on all right now. We have lost a lot of men, but none of the staff of our brigade have been hit. We have had to stay in our dug-outs nearly all the time, though, and the din of the bursting shells and the batteries has been "*simply indescribable.*"

About an hour ago I saw a German sniper crawling along some scrub, so I took two men and went after him. But he got away in the scrub. However, we picked up three of our wounded and brought them in.

Last night I had to ride with despatches a good deal, as the shell fire cut most of our telephone wires. It was rather interesting, I can tell you, with the air actually filled with bursting shrapnel and high-explosive shell. At one place I rode into a party of Germans who had got in behind our line. They opened rifle fire, but both I and my orderly got away without a scratch.

We are holding our line strong now, and think we may not have much more trouble. It is rather quieter now, though shells are bursting every few seconds around this house.

The Germans certainly dusted our jackets well this time, and at times it was actually uncomfortable, but the fact that we managed to hold the salient against a force greatly superior both in numbers and position is certainly to our credit.

Must stop now. We shall probably have a lot of work to-day. It is now 6.30 a.m., and the cook is preparing a good breakfast as usual.

DESPERATE FIGHTING

April 23rd, 1915.

The sun has risen on many a dead Canadian this morning. You can say that it is very unlikely that braver troops can be found than the Canadians; they have behaved splendidly. Canada can expect a startler *re* the casualties, but she can be sure she has good fighting material. I have been up all night, and feel very tired. We were shelled out of our last billet and had a narrow escape. I am sitting in the same place, and the same noise is going on and shells are whistling past and shaking the house as usual. A bomb from an aeroplane has

just burst by the house, a man wounded and a horse killed, and as I stood at the door to give an order, one of these steel arrows dropped at my feet. This is the fifth day of the battle, almost without interruption. I still have my clothes on, but have been able to get a shave and two feet washes. I breakfasted on hard tack and jam, with a mixture of rum, water, and tea that I had in my water bottle to wash it down. Yesterday I had tea and a box of sardines. The medical people are splendid, and work hard and lose many. It is a strange sight to see the Belgian peasant women and children fleeing, some too old to walk far, the poor souls! You see an old woman with a few household goods and a few children in a two-wheeled cart, and with a boy and girl in the shafts and perhaps three dogs harnessed under it pulling, while larger children push behind. We brought down an aeroplane this morning. They shelled a town in our rear last evening, and drove the hospital people out of some house, so that two hundred or so wounded had to be taken out and laid in a field. When I went up to . . . I rode through quite a few batteries all going full blast. There were English, Canadians, Algerians, French, Senegalese, Arabs, Belgian, and Indian troops around. I have had no sleep or clothes off for some days and nights, and the fighting is desperate. My hair is cropped close—yes, I am a beauty—I have no use for brush or comb.

From Officer of Divisional Train.

THE FOLLOWING COMMUNIQUÉ WAS ISSUED BY THE WAR OFFICE

April 24th.

The fight for the ground into which the Germans penetrated between Steenstraate and Langemarck still continues. The loss of this part of the line laid bare the left of the Canadian Division, which was forced to fall back in order to keep in touch with the right of the neighbouring troops.

In the rear of the latter had been four Canadian 4·7 guns, which thus passed into the hands of the enemy. But some hours later the Canadians made a most brilliant and successful advance, recapturing these guns and taking a considerable number of German prisoners, including a Colonel.

The Canadians had many casualties, but their gallantry and determination undoubtedly saved the situation. Their conduct has been magnificent throughout.

CANADIAN DIVISION

April 24th.

Following received from Commander-in-Chief begins Please forward following to General Alderson begins I wish to express to you and Canadian troops my admiration of the gallant stand and fight they have made A.A.A. They have performed a most brilliant and valuable service A.A.A. Last night and again this morning I reported their splendid behaviour to the Secretary-of-State for War and I have a reply from him saying how highly their gallantry and determination in a difficult position are appreciated in England ends.

From 2nd Army.

Time, 2.05 p.m.

IN WITH THE PATS

The Ditch,
East of Ypres.
April 30th, 1915.

Your more than welcome letter was brought up by the ration party, and I enjoyed reading it by the first streaks of daylight this morning.

Owing to the reserve troops being taken to support the action a couple of miles to our left, we have been left in the trench for ten days now with no word of a relief. This action has cut our division up, as you know, but it is all in a day's work. They have made a great name for themselves.

I am with the P.P.C.L.I., and like them all very much.

You will remember that our battalion was left behind, so I was fortunate in getting in with the Pats.

Thank you very much for holding on to my kit bag. Would you mind sending it.

P.S.—(May 6th). We are out, but having it hot at present. We were very badly shelled day before yesterday, losing over 150 men and three officers. We go in for forty-eight hours to-night.

A STRENUOUS TIME

May 4th.

We have been having a pretty strenuous time of late, and as I have not had my clothes off for a fortnight I rather look forward to a change. We had an awful hammering from the 22nd to the 25th, and any one who said that the Germans were short of ammunition before that time made a great mistake. They literally plastered the place with big shells, and then what was much worse and a low-down trick, they turned poisonous gas over the trenches. Most extraordinary stuff, a sort of bluish-green mist, was blown over the trenches; it felt cold to breathe, and immediately one felt it in one's lungs and began to cough and gasp for breath. It knocked the men out like nine-pins and several have died of it. All the same the regiment hung on to their trenches, and really did wonders. It was an anxious time. However, outside their machine guns, artillery, and poisonous gas, the Germans are not really a very dangerous lot.

We are going back to billets now to refit, with a very much reduced battalion. Our casualties were heavy, but we hope to see most of them back again soon, as many were only slight wounds and the effects of the gas. Nothing could have been finer than the way the battalion behaved.

I expect you will see some of the wounded at home and hear all about the engagement. I am afraid it has been a very costly battle. The 24th was our hard day. Since the 25th what remains of the regiment has been in reserve, standing to, but as they appear to have collected lots of troops now and the German attacks seem to have slackened, we expect to go back to billets in a day or so to refit. Poor M. was hit in chest, D. in leg, E. escaped; he did very well. All the regiments have lost heavily. I was lucky myself, and was not touched and feel in first-rate condition, but I won't be sorry to get a week or so in billets.

We have not had any mail for some time, as I suppose they are accumulating it for us when we get back; then I hope to have news.

Well, I must turn in to sleep.

OUR BATTLEFIELD

In a Dug-out.
May 5th, 1915.

. . . . What a life! what an escape! Really I ought to be a stiff—way out there on our battlefield—because I said my prayers and prepared for the inevitable bullet to do its worst, but nothing came except one clean through my hat. I saw stars with a jerk, thought I was hit, but nothing doing, and this day I am situated in a dug-out on the banks of the Yser Canal at 6.30 a.m., just having dined. You can imagine our charge. We were in three lines, B and C Companies in the first line, A and D in the second line, and two companies of the 16th Battalion Scots in rear. We had to retake a wood the French had lost.

We were called out from Ypres about 5 o'clock, as people were streaming over the hills, and the sky was a hell of bursting shrapnel, and we took up our trenches about 6.30 on the Thursday night. We lay in reserve until about 11.30, I believe, and then they told us we were to take the wood at the point of the bayonet. Shortly after we charged across 500 yards open country, and by a series of rushes got to the trench—during that charge we lost many men out of our battalion. I saw poor C. go down and stopped to help him, but he urged us on. Then A. fell—poor old chap—right through the head. When we got to the skirt of the wood we found a trench, just dug by the Germans, which we did not know was there. This is where hell began. They had two machine guns mounted, and the fire was awful—like hailstones on a zinc roof; but somehow a few of us were missed, while other fellows were cut in half by the stream of lead. At this point poor P. fell, right in front of his men—his revolver empty, and only a

cane for defence—right through the wood, jabbing here, stabbing there. I remember I laughed, but it was nervous tension, and they do wriggle so too! N. had a fence with one 6′ 6″ Prussian, and to clear he parried, lunged, and then lunged again quickly—the latter took just all of the lower part of the Prussian's face away. We tried to stick the part on to the whole next day, but the 6′ 6″ was dead. We held the trench that night, and as I got sent down with three prisoners I missed the rest that day, but that night got in again on rations. We repulsed two attacks that night, and next morn when sun was well up we were ordered to file out of our dearly won trench, and to take cover in a cabbage field behind. In order to get there we had to cross 35 yards open—raked by m.g. fire and rifles from a German trench 150 yards away. The two in front of me, F. and H., went away. F. dropped with one amidships and H. got one right in the neck, so it came my turn. I crawled, and then suddenly an idea came as it does to most when in great danger. I lay and lit my pipe, and suddenly got up and ran as hard as I could. Bullets whizzed and I dropped—a pitiful object,. and slowly raised on my side and dropped again, slowly spread out my right arm and then lay still—imitation, but really to get my pipe I'd dropped and to crawl to cover. I got to the cabbages safe and sound—sharp left wheel—sharp right wheel, and then on hands and knees for about 100 yards, when I came to a shell hole into which I crawled. Here I nearly got it. Whilst looking up a bullet came so close as to scratch the lobe of my right ear, and just burnt the skin, but it made my head sing for a day and a half. Out of the cabbages, down a slight slope put one on dead ground (safety). Two others and I crawled to some dug-outs to get our wind and pluck back. That cabbage field must be full of dead men. I took shelter behind one for a space—then back again to headquarters for a space until we reinforced the 8th Battalion. The rest was plain sailing as compared with the other, except we had poisoned fumes to deal with.

We had two days off, and now have been in reserve trenches for six days, and look like being here another six. I have often wanted to see a fight, and now I have done so I don't want any more. I think of all awful sights it was the field the next morning prior to vacating the trench—of all the dead and dying lying all about in contorted shapes. One poor chap lay with his chin in his hands—eyes wide open—all equipped where he had dropped for cover when the flares went up, but a little blue hole in his forehead. That sight, combined with the cries of the wounded during the night, I shall never forget. We had the charge and bore the brunt of it all. I don't know what the 16th lost. Lots of our poor chaps were wounded in the trench, and had to be left behind in the retreat. We know what they got.

We are going back to the base to be reorganised, and it's then I shall try to transfer, as most of my nerve has gone, what with the terrible sights to one unused to it, and the loss of one's friends—it's hell. Never you mind—we made an undying name in history, and it was the " now famous 10th " that actually did it. We had twenty-six officers before and two after, so you can see it was pretty bad. Poor M.—an awfully nice chap—was wounded, and whilst being taken to the hospital his ambulance was hit by a Jack Johnson, and all inside as well as car blown to smithereens. To give you an idea of a J. J., the Empire Hotel at Y. in the market square was hit by one. The whole hotel was blown across the market, and blew to bits seven civilians 200 yards away. The hotel was about as big as Southampton Hotel at Surbiton. That's no fib at all. You see the shell weighs 2,000 lb. of high explosive, and when it bursts it goes like thunder followed by a crash and clouds of red smoke. Here's another J. J.—hit a large elm tree to which was tied a horse. After the explosion and dust had cleared there was a hole in the ground 30 ft. across, 16 to 20 ft. deep—no sign of the tree or the horse except a few bespattered splinters. To see is to believe. . . . It was so bad that when we filed out of the wood—about twenty-five of us—a wounded German officer, poor chap, raised himself up to a sitting position and saluted us, saying: " Brave men, brave men," and then he fell back dead. We would have saved him if we could because he was a sportsman. You must remember that they *have* to fight.

A NOVEL BREAKFAST

Back in Billets,
May 7th, 1915.

Gee! but I had a novel breakfast the other day. We returned to town in ones and twos, and as young G. and I came into Ypres a jolly artilleryman came forward and said: " You boys 10th? " " Sure! " " Well, come in here and have some supper." We went in, and what do you think—roast chicken, lobster salad, jellies, and champagne—the latter galore. You can imagine what a feed after six days' fighting on dry biscuits and water. The first pint made a man of me, the third a fool, but it helped us to forget the horrors we had seen, and left. The next morning brekker was cold chick-egg omelette, which I learned to make out here under the direction of a little French girl. I lost that Thermos—they put a bullet clean through bottle and all. We lost all our kit—everything.

I received last night parcel containing two shirts, two vests, three

hankies, and this pad, for which I am truly thankful. I had a top-hole bath in a ditch this morning, and with a complete change of underwear I changed from a pack-mule to a human being. By the way, that clean shirt is the envy of the platoon.

The country is great here—green fields, cowslips, buttercups and daisies, birds' nests. I am going birds'-nesting on Sunday—nothing like having a real holiday when the chance comes along.

GERMAN RATIONS AND TROPHIES

The Canadian Scottish
(16th Battn. C.E.F.),
France.
May 11th, 1915.

I have had very little chance to write letters, or I should have written you long ago. Just now we are having a rest amid some beautiful green fields where the country has not been disturbed by the devastation of war. We still have the guns going and we are liable at any moment to be ordered to the front line ; but it is a delightful change after the strenuous time we have been through. No doubt you have seen something about it in the papers. The Canadian Scottish with the 10th Battalion had to make a change the night the French lines broke. It was just to make a slam at the Germans to check them on their onward rush. The French had cleared out from in front of them and we were back in Ypres in reserve. The rest of the Canadians were holding their part of the line. We marched out several miles at night, formed up and charged the forward German positions. We bayoneted them out of the trenches they were digging for the night, and chased them out of a large wood for a thousand yards through their lines. We then settled down in their trench before daylight arrived and held it for a couple of days, until we were relieved by another regiment. We jolted them so severely and gave them such a scare that they did not come on any farther, although they must have outnumbered us tremendously. Our men fed on German rations for the next day, which were found in the trench, and all of us got trophies in the shape of German helmets, bayonets, mess tins, etc. Our losses were severe, and some of my best friends are gone, but seldom is a success attained in war without anguish for some one. The men are good stuff. They fought splendidly and never wavered for a moment. We took quite a few prisoners, but the Germans must have lost heavily in killed and wounded. I saw lots of them.

When are you coming over to see the Canadian troops ?

HOW WE SPEND THE DAY

OFFIZIER-GEFANGENENLAGER.
May 18th, 1915.

I am still in the best of health, and on the whole having rather a good time. I am sure that by now you ought to have received some of my letters and postcards. It takes about three weeks for a letter to go from here to England, and of course it is censored before leaving and on arrival. This is a fine healthy spot, and the sea breezes are glorious. We have very comfortable quarters, and the longest way around the island is a mile and a half, which gives us a good walk; also we have plenty of room for games and exercise.

We have a nice lagoon where one can fish, and as soon as the weather gets a little warmer we will be able to bathe.

You would like to know how we spend the day. We have to get up by 8 a.m.; coffee generally comes up about 8.30. Then we exercise or read until 1 p.m., when we have dinner. After dinner we enjoy ourselves until about 6.30 or so, when we go in and have tea or supper. Dinner is supplied, and we buy whatever we want for tea or supper. From 8.30 to 9 p.m. Roll-call in your rooms. 10 p.m. lights out; therefore, you see, your chief occupation is to put in time and try and keep from getting too fat. I would like to know how many of our chaps got put out of action in the engagement in which we were captured, and also how many of the officers are still left.

We do not get any English or American papers, and news is very scarce. I was very sorry to hear the *Lusitania* had gone down. I hope there were no home people on board. You can expect a letter or a postcard from me every Monday or seven days, which is four postcards and two letters per month. These letters and postcards I will send to you, therefore you can look forward to the arrival as per schedule. I want you to try and find out about our pay, because we have to pay for breakfast and supper, and it costs about 8 marks a day to live for food alone; also I have borrowed some money from some of the chaps here, and want to pay it back. If you could arrange to have about £5 sent out every month, it would be far the best. Has my sleeping-bag been sent home yet? Most of my kit is in it. I understand from most of the English officers that their pay is going on as usual. Keep all the papers which have anything of interest about the Canadians. They will be jolly interesting after the war is over, particularly home papers. We ought to very soon start to receive our parcels. I am anxiously waiting for both the clothes and food, and particularly the white bread. Brown being our ration, one is apt to get little tired of it. Also anything you see in the eatable line that you

think would be acceptable, send it along. Cocoa or chocolate will also be very welcome.

Now, you must write to me every few days and give me all the news of home. We are not allowed to receive any war news or anything which is in any way against the German Empire. Are you still at Folkestone? If so, how long do you intend to stay? What sort of weather have you been having? The weather here is jolly fine, but a little colder than ——. It is a much nicer place and we are all very pleased over the change.

If you can get me some books and magazines they will help to pass the time—cheap bindings for the books, because it would be a waste of money to have good bindings.

How are auntie and uncle getting along, not to mention P. and I.? You might write to them for me and tell them why I cannot write, but that letters from them will be very welcome. You can also tell them what they can put in their letters. We have a chap here, H., whose mother is in England. He is from home. You might drop her a line or get in touch with her if possible. He was captured the next day to us and we have been together ever since. Needless to say he is a jolly good fellow.

I hope that you are all well. I will feel very much relieved when I hear from you. You might send me a Prayer Book and a Bible. Both of these I lost.

I must hurry up and finish, as they are waiting for the letter. If you can get a copy of the American motor paper I would like to have one. Well, good-bye, and don't forget that I am waiting for the money, about £10 to start with and £5 a month. Of course I realise this will be impossible unless the pay continues.

This life is just like living in an English public school. We have nineteen in our room, and they are a very cheery lot. You never have much of an opportunity to get dumpy. One chap at —— had seventeen wounds, including a shot through the jaws. Outside of being slightly disfigured he was quite all right and very bright. Another chap here was in a trench which was blown up, and he was buried for three hours; finally dug out by the Germans, when they were digging a new trench. He was pretty nearly dead, but has apparently not suffered very much and he is fit as rain now. When I finally get home I will be able to tell you of the experiences of some of these chaps, which read like a story book.

B., who was killed with us, was buried, and his grave marked. His people might like to know that he was properly buried.

After the war we will get a motor-car, and I will drive you around Belgium and France, just to show you the different battle-

fields and trenches, because I am sure it will be very interesting to you.

I might say that I am now very well aware of the value of money; after being practically penniless for a month, with a prospect of perhaps another before it can possibly arrive from home, sort of teaches you economy in the true meaning of the word.

Have there been many promotions or any recommendations in the regiment?

Remember me to all my friends, and if you see any chaps from the regiment, tell them to drop me a line.

P.S.—I have grown a moustache. This is just to warn you, so that you will not be too severely shocked when you see me after the war.

You might also send me out a soft service cap. This I have is too small.

THE SPIRIT OF CHEERFULNESS

May 19th, 1915.

On the Monday after the fateful 22nd I was taken with numerous others from the base to reinforce the battalion. And here was an ordeal. You were afraid almost to ask who had been spared. Never shall I forget the look on the faces of the men who in providence came out unscathed. It was a look of distress mingled with pride—distress for their fallen comrades, pride when they remembered what they had accomplished. After the charge I spent five days and five nights in the support trenches, and there you have ample opportunity of seeing what manner of men make up the Canadian Scottish. You would naturally think that, after what they endured, nothing could save them from nervous collapse. Nothing of the kind. Over all is the spirit of cheerfulness and pluck which never deserts them. As one fellow said to me: "This is no time for the pulling of long faces." The loss of their comrades and the endurance and memory of that never-to-be-forgotten night only stimulates for further effort. The tales of heroism I have listened to would fill a column—the wounded helping the wounded and dying; officers mortally wounded buoying up the men to victory. To our Colonel and the gallant officers under his command great tribute is due. When the time comes when deeds are recorded, their courage and bravery will be read with glowing satisfaction. The fact that eighteen officers were either killed or wounded out of one battalion will bring home the magnitude of the struggle. But it was victory, and although we mourn for those who have fallen on sleep, we do not mourn as those

who have no hope. The Dominion who sent them will send others like unto them. It was just our gift to the Empire.

AN ARGUMENT WITH THE DOG

May 20th, 1915.

Well, we are somewhere in the mud about four miles from the firing line, which, from present signs, we should reach this week. They have battered us over quite a section of country during the past two weeks, and some of our abodes have been anything but desirable. Barns are the prime favourites, and occasionally one of us has an argument with the dog as to who will occupy his house; needless to say the poor dog generally loses. They hold us down so fine as to what we may write, that it is rather difficult to work in any stuff that would be of interest to you, and even at that you will no doubt have difficulty in deciphering this drivel of mine, which is being scribbled on my knee whilst sitting by the roadside. Here comes a bunch of German prisoners, so please excuse me while I look them over. Well, they have passed, and save from their yellow faces (caused no doubt by the lyddite) they don't look too badly at all. Some are pretty husky-looking chaps. 'Twas ever thus—we have to fall in for something or other, so I must ring off for this time. A. sends his love to the *Comforts*, as do I also.

From Officer of R.C.D.

ON THE MOVE

May 20th, 1915.

Since leaving England we have been constantly on the move. In fact we have moved about more than any other Division out here.

At Ypres the whole division was splendid, the Infantry, Artillery, Medical, Supplies, all did their work equally well, and with the same indomitable courage.

We were pulled out of action badly shattered, but still with a sting, on May 3rd, and after resting for a few days to refit and reorganise we are at it again. Our 2nd and 3rd Brigades attack to-night.

Everybody too busy to get into trouble or to write long letters. If there is anything that can be done to help you in your good work, it shall be done cheerfully.

From Officer at Divisional Headquarters.

SHARING GOOD AND ILL

FRANCE.
May 27th, 1915.

How glad I am to hear about you again and your good work. I can hardly say how proud I am of our lads. At the same time the loss of so many of them has been a great and trying sorrow. You cannot for months on end share the good and ill with these lads and not grieve. A finer bunch of fellows it has never been my lot to meet, and I have made friendships time will never efface. We are passing through evil days, but it may be that after tribulation we may inherit the Kingdom.

OUT OF A PECK OF TROUBLE

May 28th.

Now, just to give you an idea of the time we spent during the three weeks we were in the trenches. For the first two days we were in the front line it was A1, but after that fireworks started. It was on a Thursday morning that we got our first real taste of modern warfare in the shape of an extra heavy artillery bombardment. From then until Sunday night this was kept up until nearly every one of us " had the rats."

Immediately on our left the Germans tried their gas plant, and a very funny thing it looked like to see the heavy banks of yellow-green clouds roll down on the trenches. We took it for sulphur fumes, but this was only for a few minutes, as the tail-end of the cloud caught some of our battalion. The Germans, besides using this gas, were also using gas shells, the smoke from which got in your eyes and nearly blinded you. I can assure you we got our fair share of these stinkpots, as they sent them over at the rate of eight an hour for fully twelve hours. Up to this time our casualties had been very few, but when we got the order on Sunday night to retire this was reversed.

We had to cross an open field which the Germans had covered with machine guns. A person has not the least idea of the havoc these guns work until he has been through the mill. We got out of this peck of trouble all right, but we got stuck into another the next day, as we were sent up as reserves.

It was here I saw the prettiest piece of manœuvring it has been my luck to witness. The —— were being sent up as reinforcements to the firing line, and as the shells were falling all around like hailstones it was really pretty to see the men run forward a few yards and then drop down flat, and so on. This was carried on for at least a mile on either

side of where we were lying. An ammunition column, with six horses to each wagon, also went tearing across the open fields, with shells bursting all around. You would have thought it was only a regular field day instead of a red-letter day in Britain's history.

We were at last relieved as every one thought for a holiday, but it turned out to be a false alarm, as we were only marched back about six miles. We stopped the night there, but, thanks to an aeroplane, we were shelled out in the morning. We moved back for about a mile, where we stopped for about thirty-six hours. Then about eight o'clock in the evening came the order to pack up ready to move off, and for almost a week we did guard duty.

We were at last relieved, and on the march to our billets we covered about twenty-two miles. Of those who started on that march only about a score landed, the rest having dropped out on account of fatigue. But little wonder, for from the time we went into the trenches until we reached our billets—a period of twenty-four days—not one of us had had what could be called a regular sleep, as we were all on the jump in case of an attack.

A NEW-COMER IN THE WAR ZONE

PRETTY NEAR THE FRONT.
June 1915.

Well, here I am, actually only a day away from England and all you dear people, but much farther in spirit. I have seen many little things on my way through of interest to a new-comer to the "war zone" and I must write to you before the impression fades.

To begin with, the crossing was calm and uneventful. There was a proud moment at Boulogne when I passed the lined-up civilian passengers, waiting patiently with passports in hand, and stepped off the boat with the magic formula "Militaire." A megaphone inquired uproariously, "Is Nursing Sister —— aboard?" and I was covered with confusion as I modestly replied from the gangway.

By good luck, a Red Cross car was coming straight out here that evening, for reasons of State, so I was spared all tiresome delay in Boulogne. Perhaps it wouldn't have been tiresome. I caught a glimpse of quite a gay little party in the hotel lounge, and some of our sisters, not known to me, looked happy and busy on a shopping excursion. I love our uniforms.

We left at 8. It was an event to pass the first guard and show our papers. Every now and then we were stopped by another of these determined little Frenchmen. One very nearly shot our chauffeur, who

CANADIAN ARTILLERY—AT THE FRONT.

AN OBSERVATION STATION OF THE CANADIAN ARTILLERY.

CANADIAN ARTILLERY—AT THE FRONT.

Photo Lambert Weston, Ltd.

BRIG.-GENERAL J. C. MACDOUGALL, COMMANDING CANADIANS—SHORNCLIFFE.

WARD IN NO. 2 STATIONARY HOSPITAL —SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

VIEW OF NO. 2 STATIONARY HOSPITAL —SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

NO. 1 STATIONARY HOSPITAL— SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE.

LOADING SUPPLIES—ASHFORD.

CANADIAN FIELD COMFORTS COMMISSION—A TRUCKLOAD OF COMFORTS.

CANADIAN FIELD COMFORTS COMMISSION—MOORE BARRACKS, SHORNCLIFFE.

was bit hesitative about slowing down, and I thought all was over with him. Certainly I never felt a car decide to stop in quite such a hurry. I am quite satisfied that there is very little chance for any one foolish enough not to give instant obedience to their "Halte!"

At first it was all quiet country and funny little French villages, then we came to the billeting areas—cheerful British tones everywhere, clusters of soldiers at each turn of the road, glimpses of lighted barns with long tables full of them, a khaki-coloured bit of France. No one knew very much about our road, which pleased me immensely, as I liked to hear the various discussions, crisp officer directions, eager and willing explanations from the Tommies, and friendly but quite unreliable volubility from the natives. They all peered curiously at me, as it is very rarely that women travel these roads. The Matron tells me, in awful warning, that even experienced and valued sisters, who have had to take leave (it is a long strain since the war began) find it difficult to get back to this advanced post. One strange thing was to see the long lines of motor 'buses extending along the road-side, sometimes ten, one after the other, sometimes more than a hundred. I do not see how there are any left in London. They are all painted the same dark grey, and are used to bring the men from their billets to the trenches or else to take the happy ones back to the paradise called leave.

In the shadow of a stone wall at a turn of the road we came suddenly upon the tall, motionless figure of an Indian, one of the Bengal Lancers, keeping silent watch over their camp. He looked very impressive in the darkness.

We were delayed somewhat by banks of low-lying mist, which made one sniff curiously, and which even made one's eyes sting. Of course I decided that this was caused by the remains of the gas blowing from the Front (not so many miles away), but am told that it was simply the gunpowder smell which hangs in the air anywhere near the firing line.

Later we came to support trenches and wire entanglements, or rather to the name of them, as I could see very little by then. We passed two or three strings of ammunition wagons, returning empty from the trenches and making very little noise about it. The flare of the German "star shells" showed up very distinctly from time to time. Ours are less brilliant. We stopped the car when the first sound of the guns reached us, stopped and listened to their dull, remorseless, deadly sound. What a dreadful concrete fact war is to us now. At first it was only an idea, appalling and terrible, but far off; now it presses so on us, it is in all our lives. War seems pretty grim and hard-working close at hand, and this is not the most light-hearted place in the world.

It is a queer, big, rambling place of courts and narrow stairs and low, dark rooms. The street was sadly easy to find by reason of the long string of ambulances making their careful way. My dear, do you know it just goes on all the time! Always the constant stream of ambulances and the huddled figures inside with their poor pathetic feet sticking out. They lift them out carefully, in the dark, and last night some had to stay on the floor for hours. The surgeons work turn about, all day and all night. It is an overworked, overcrowded hospital with no time for fads or frills, but with wonderful people working here and wonderful results. The sisters simply adore the Tommies, they are so good and endure anything cheerfully, and there are two boy officers being very brave men and a grey-haired subaltern who is dying absolutely ungrudgingly for his country. Their courage humbles one.

I may never have time to write you a scrawl like this again; besides, one can scribble about outside impressions, but not of the real things inside these walls. It is a hard life and sad, and I don't count one bit, but I am proud and glad to be here to do something for our men, our dear men.

P.S.—I forgot to say we might really be shelled some night!

BEAUTIFUL JUNE DAYS

— Field Ambulance,
First Contingent,
Canadian Expeditionary Force,
France.
June 6th, 1915.

I was delighted to receive your note; it brought back some pleasant memories of afternoon teas and "The George" which stood out like oases in the desert mud of Sling Plantation.

It seems like a thousand years since we left England. The past is a haze, the future unknown; one lives only in the present, glad to be well and alive in these beautiful June days. The longer you live here the more you believe in predestination; why a shell should burst in an open field over there, or burrow a hole in the ground a few feet away from you without bursting, or blow the top of the place next door off, is a mystery, and always will be a mystery. We lived a thousand lives at Ypres; we treated in our ambulance alone some 5,200 cases in six days, at times under heavy shell fire, carried hundreds by hand, out of danger, into fields and never lost a patient. A good many of our own boys were wounded; I had the luck to get hit with a piece of shrapnel, but it hit the bone in the front of the leg, and did not amount to anything, did

not even have to quit work. We have been hard at it again down here. There will be many a sad heart in Canada, and many, many more before the end; it is only the beginning now. If you could only supply thousands of guns and millions of high-explosive shells, the war would soon end, for a British or Canadian soldier is equal to two Germans minus high explosive. There is no shortage on their side.

Hope you are not tired. My best wishes and many thanks.

A WARM TIME

June 7th, 1915.

We have had rather a warm time since we came out, in two senses of the word, as the weather has been absolutely superb, barring one or two bad thunder showers.

I had rather a humorous and at the same time hair-raising exploit this afternoon. We came out of the trenches on Friday evening, and came along eventually to this village, through which was a dandy canal, broad, clean, and deep; and as the day was awfully hot, we had a bathing parade this afternoon. While we were swimming around enjoying ourselves the Germans started chucking shells across; one fell in a field about 100 yards away, which only made the fellows look, as they have got so callous; but about half a minute later one fell on the bank and wounded five, and three more fell near us in the water in quick succession. Well! you should have seen the scatter! I broke all records for the fifty yards' dash to the bank, picked up my clothes, and streaked naked over a hedge, railway, and about three fields before I stopped and looked round; all I could see was naked bodies darting in all directions; I simply had to laugh. Well, they dropped another half-dozen shells and then stopped; that is only an afternoon's pastime for the Germans.

But I have a nastier one than that to tell you. On the way from the trenches on Friday we stopped in a village about two miles back from the line; mind, this was fully inhabited, that's where I think the authorities make a big mistake. Anyway, we stayed until Saturday night, then a spy either gave the news away or an aeroplane saw us, and the shelling started; they fell all round us. I was standing talking to my best chum, a fellow from the wilds of Canada, in the street, and a shell fell just beside us. He pitched forward into my arms and gasped: "Good-bye, I'm done!" I laid him on his back, and did all I could for him; but he died with his jugular vein severed and a gaping wound through his lungs. While I knelt over him, another burst near, and I ran across, as there had been some women near; when the dust had

cleared I found two women, a girl about sixteen, and a little baby about nine months, all mangled, lying dead. We carried them into a house and covered them with sheets and placed my chum beside them. Another shell wounded badly five of our fellows, then we were ordered to pull out, which we did, and came on here; but no place within ten miles is safe. I made a cross, put all particulars on it, and made a wreath of beautiful flowers, which I got in the garden of a house ruined by shell; then, yesterday, Sunday, a party of a dozen of us went back and buried him under a beautiful pear tree in a quiet place, and as we turned away I don't think I ever saw a more beautiful picture than that quiet grave.

From N.C.O. of Royal Canadian Dragoons.

ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL THINGS

No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital.
June 10th, 1915.

As you know, with the advent of the First Contingent in answer to the Mother Country's call, No. 2 Canadian Stationary Hospital enjoyed the distinction of being the first unit of that Colonial Division to receive orders to proceed across the channel in discharge of duties upon active service.

We established ourselves in what is known, during peace time, as a hotel. Here, since the month of November, we have unceasingly assumed our share of the burden of caring for the sick and wounded Canadian and British Tommy alike.

We had at the beginning initial accommodation of 300 beds, but since then, across the road, on the golf course, we have established a tent hospital and now have a total of 560 beds. During the memorable stand of our Canadian boys, April 22nd, and following days, this hospital was filled to overflowing, and I can assure you no effort was spared by officers, nursing sisters, orderlies in every ward to alleviate the suffering of each and every one. In the short period of seven days' time about 2,000 patients were cared for.

One of the most wonderful things in the present war is the magnificent hospital arrangements which have been made by the British War Office all over Northern France. All the large hotel buildings in all the coasts cities are now fitted up as hospitals, and fitted up in such a way that you would hardly know that they had not been built for the purpose. There is practically nothing in the way of equipment, remodelling buildings to make them suitable, hospital supplies of every

kind, good food, and hospital comforts that the War Office have not generously given us to help us with our work.

We find that in our tent hospital our patients are happy and contented, and make equally as good, if not more rapid, recovery than in the hospital buildings. We have treated during the past six weeks many patients suffering from the notorious gas used by the Germans, and in the treatment of these cases the outdoor life in our tents gives wonderful results. At present we have the smallest number of patients in our hospital that we have had for many months.

SERVING BESIDE HEROES

June 13th, 1915.

What a satisfaction it is, and honour, to serve beside such heroes. A wounded London officer told one of ours in Boulogne Hospital that he never saw anything like the Canadian stretcher-bearers. His men tried to hold back our fellows from going out to the wounded one day, thinking it nothing short of suicide. But nothing would stop them. It was their job and they were going to do it, no matter what the shelling was. The morning the 5th made their charge on the fortified German post (May 24th) when their losses were so heavy; they charged right over the parapet where the Londoners were. The latter cheered them to the echo and some jumped over and joined in too. This post, I may tell you, had previously resisted attacks from the regulars and us three times. The 5th were bound to get it, if it took the last man, and they did. We were anxiously waiting for the news. When the time arrived at which the attack was to be made, one grew very anxious. Soon I heard the most murderous machine-gun fire, and I could not help thinking that once more the attack had failed. Then I heard the hard "tat-tat-tat" of the Colt, and knew we had not stopped. By and by we saw the three blue lights go up and knew we had once more won. The taking of it was not the worst, though; it was the awful pounding we had to endure the next day to hold it. The same thing happened to the 10th two days before. They took 450 yards of German trench, but suffered frightfully holding it, as the Germans seemed to turn all the guns in creation on them. But once you get these things you must hold them, or what's the good of spending valuable lives getting them, and the 2nd Brigade has never given up a thing yet that could be held. Twice in that week we had the message, "Well done, Second Brigade!" but gratifying as such messages are, they do not console us for the loss of not only brave men, but of dear friends as well, for I think of all friendships those cemented on the field of battle are strongest.

I suppose when they take the Division out, as they must soon, some may have a chance to get away. We need men badly and are told 10,000 are on their way from Canada now. I hope it is true, but we must have time to break them into our way of doing things and getting acquainted with them. The last time in the trenches we had only 1,600 rifles in the Brigade. I am sorry I must stop, as the orderly has warned me the mail is closing. I have so much to tell you, but it must wait until I see you.

SOMETHING DOING

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE,
June 14th, 1915.

Swing your kilt, keep your eyes on the papers, there's going to be "something doing" soon, and we are going to be in it. Don't know what part of the line we will be, but have been given to understand it will be where we will have some fun—"let-'em-all-come."

The firing line is great fun, I don't think. Spent last Wednesday on Piccadilly, Regent Street, Leicester Lounge, and other interesting streets in the firing line. It's all so wonderful, you can't realise you're fighting, but you bet your life we are. Our C.O. is a splendid chap; he *talks* to you all the time—at least it seems like that, and all the time they are orders; it is such a welcome change, I can assure you.

Quite a lot of rain lately, but to-day the sun is out, and we are enjoying it very much. Last night there was quite a warm time "up front"; we could see the flares and the J.J.'s and C.B.'s were very noisy, and the blooming things don't care where they drop, but sure our poor old dug-out would last about as long as a snowball in N.C. if one should strike it.

Waiting for lunch now. You ought to see our "château de luxe," it's "some joint." One thing in its favour is lots of air.

How are the Comforts? Have you been doing as much manual labour as when we saw you last, and your very competent staff of assistants? Nearly all our old men are here, and best of all, I have my old servant back. You can't imagine how glad I was to see them again.

Have had your respirator with me constantly; they are new out here, and think will be O.K.

Went past Col. L.'s dug-out, but did not call: we were in a "hurry."

Have been spending most of our time watching aeroplane duels and shells dropping on right flank; football on our front, and mosquitoes everywhere.

This is a stupid letter, but there is absolutely nothing we can say, and have to censor our own letters.

Do hope you will answer this before the war is over.

INTERESTING WORK

No. 2 Canadian General Hospital,
British Expeditionary Force.
June 16th, 1915.

About three weeks ago I received orders to join No. 2 General Hospital—Canadian—and a man was sent to relieve me. I don't know whether the change is permanent, all the M.O.'s who were through the terrible time in May were relieved for a while and sent back, but it is the policy to send senior officers to the hospitals where presumably their special qualifications will be of more avail, and so I may be kept here.

We are in a beautiful spot, the hospital has 1,100 beds and is in tents. We have tennis, golf, and the country around is beautiful; there are many delightful walks and villages. The work is very interesting, and there is plenty of congenial company, so I am enjoying life. This is quite a gay resort in ordinary times, but of course will be quieter this year.

Of course, one misses the excitement and constant change of life at the front, but the everlasting crash of shells and the feeling of uncertainty and danger gets on one's nerves, and then the terrible losses we sustained; the wiping out of so many of one's intimate friends and the complete disorganisation of our splendid regiment was awfully disheartening. Life was very blue after Langemarck, and the interest seemed to have gone completely out of it, so I was glad to have a change, just as I will be glad to get back among those who are left and take a share in their trials, for life becomes little else there—the officers feel that it is only a question of time till something happens.

The books and magazines were distributed in the regiment, and I can assure you are very much appreciated. Thanks for all your kindness —it is so much appreciated.

FRIENDS AND VISITORS

London,
June 20th, 1915.

The following somewhat rambling remarks fell from the lips of a private in the P.P.C.L.I. or the P.P.'s, as they are usually called with the Army at the front, where every regiment has a nickname and time

is sometimes everything. Troops passing at night will ask: "Who are you?" "K.S.L.I., M.G.S.," which is King's Shropshire Light Infantry, Machine Gun Section; or "3 K.R.R., S.B.," being the King's Royal Rifles, 3rd Battalion Stretcher-bearers.

This good fellow, whom it was my privilege to visit, when in Canada is a prosperous land-owner and ranchman in Alberta, and was badly wounded on May 8th in what Sir John French now calls the Second Battle of Ypres. The regiment joined the Expeditionary Force early in December, and has done much since to sustain the name and honour of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

"Sit down," says my host, "and don't let us make a noise, as that poor chap in the next bed got it in so many places; it is taking the hard-working doctors and cheerful nurses all their time to keep what there is of him together. Everybody is very kind to us, and all sorts of people just blow in here, and we talk to each other as if we were old friends, and after the war is over we will all understand each other better, and realise something about the brotherhood of man, if we don't all start trying to make money too fast, and put false values on it. I have never been so happy as during the last few months in France, realising that the only value one had was as an individual fighting unit, and we have all tried to become millionaires, but without and unlike the financial bother, it need not be at the expense of the other fellow.

"A few days ago an officer in uniform sat beside my bed, and asked me all sorts of questions about Canada and France. He said he was not a Canadian, but he tried to be a good subject of the Empire. 'I wish I were a younger man,' he said, 'and not so full of engagements in London, as I really have a lot to do. Two of my boys are at the front, one in the Army, the other in the Navy; they are both youngsters, but I am told they are trying to do their bit. They keep me posted in the news, and I often think a week in the trenches and a few hard night fatigues would do me more good than my morning ride in the Park at half-past seven.' A few minutes afterwards a lady chatted to me about my wound, and was very interested in my X-ray photograph; if the nurse had not been firm, I think she would have examined my wounds. Imagine my surprise when the sister told me afterwards it was the King and Queen. I remember in Flanders the Prince of Wales walked into our billet in a pretty dirty farm barn; the barnyard was in an awful state; and talked to us about the quickest way to drain it. None of us were keen on a drainage fatigue, as you seldom occupy the same billets twice; we all thought he was one of our new subalterns, full of zeal.

"The poor old regiment (we are not one year old yet) has gone

CANADIAN FIELD COMFORTS COMMISSION—PACKING-ROOM.

CANADIAN FIELD COMFORTS COMMISSION—BALES FOR THE FRONT.

DIBGATE CAMP—SHORNCLIFFE.

AT THE CONVALESCENT CAMP, MONK'S HORTON.

EVENING MEAL—DIBGATE CAMP.

BAND OF 11TH BATTALION AT MOORE BARRACKS HOSPITAL.

A STREET CORNER—FOLKESTONE.

TENTS AT DIBGATE.

ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH--SHORNCLIFFE

ST. MARTIN'S PLA
SHORNCLIFFE

through a lot since we left Ottawa last August. Our great loss was Colonel Farquhar; I think we all felt he was our personal friend. He was very strict on parade, and if you were up before him in Orderly Room he looked right through you, and you knew there was no good trying to work off the best-thought-out fairy tale, so we just took our medicine. He used to dole out punishments with a smile, and often reminded us that if the medicine did not effect a cure he would have to change the treatment, and most of us were cured first time. After a man had done his punishment, he never held it against him for promotion. He used to come down to the trenches at night and discuss with us how the ditches they called trenches could be improved, and he always liked us to suggest schemes. I think if we had met the Germans the night he was killed we would have left our mark, and the same spirit is still with the regiment. I remember on the night of May 7th an officer saying to his company, when he lined them up to occupy a new trench: 'You may expect a bad day to-morrow; if you get your chance, don't forget the men over there killed our Colonel.'

"The regiment left Ottawa, in August, 1,130 strong, and 34 officers; we have had drafts amounting to 612 and 28 fresh officers. On the 6th we had 140 casualties in the same trenches, but we held our ground. Sir John French had sent the Division word the day before, that at all cost the ground must be held. His report to us afterwards is worth reading, and to those who have lost relations it should be a consolation, as no praise could be stronger, and British generals are pretty stolid fellows, I hear, and not given to saying things they don't mean unless it is bad language, and they must often have an excuse.

"I think we will all be better men for our experience. We are a cheery lot, often a rowdy lot and you might think devil-me-care and hard sort of fellows, but I think the real secret is that each of us always wants to buck the other chap up, and I know every one of us is constantly mindful of the comrades who have taken their long leave. When my Company Sergeant-Major Dames was instantly killed by a high explosive, I heard a lieutenant—badly wounded by the same shell—say: 'I would willingly have taken his share.' This officer has since died of wounds. Such experiences as these must make men of the worst of us, and the word MAN has taken on a different meaning, and is not the man as I used to know him; often liked him, was generally indifferent to him, frequently disliked him, reasonably hated him, and generally turned out to be a fool if I trusted him. In this war I have come to know a new man, to admire him, follow him, and always trust him; perhaps he does not know himself, and wonders, and I wonder, if this can be man as we thought we understood him a year ago. I only hope that nothing will ever happen to change him back to what we

thought he was, and the few of us who are left to go back to Canada will be the better for it—but what a price we will have paid to find each other out ! "

"A POISONER IN GERMANY"

FLANDERS.
July 1st, 1915.

Some of the sayings of the men are very funny. One man writing to his wife said : " You will be glad to learn that our son is not dead, but is a *poisoner* in Germany ! " Another tells of the Germans shooting from the ends of our trenches and says : " I think they call this *invaliding* fire,"—not far wrong either, is he ?

During a long, weary march, one man was running to catch up, having dropped out to fix his puttee ; immediately a voice told him to " stop that galloping on the hard road," this having been a stringent rule when we had our horses.

HEAD DOWN AND SPIRITS UP

BELGIUM.
July 11th, 1915.

Thank you so much for the mouth organs, they were simply great.

The day they arrived we were leaving for the firing line, and had music all the way. They were divided among the platoons, so each had its own band. In the trenches it is a case of keeping your head down and your spirits up. Needless to say, the mouth organs you sent were almost entirely responsible for our splendid spirits during our stay in the front line, and sure it would have made you very happy to know you are partly responsible for the cheerfulness of our boys. Thank you for them and for myself very, very much.

Heard a pretty good thing the other day. One of our men was writing home, and he started like this : " I am alive, and so is my shirt." I am sorry to say that means me, but they help to pass away the time. " It's an ill wind," etc., etc. Am writing this in my dug-out, a very comfortable one, only you have always to be ducking your head. Have had quite a lively time for the last week, but thankful to say our company came out without a casualty. Am sorry to have to tell you C. and F. have both gone to hospital, so our original family is dwindling gradually.

We are holding the line where one of the largest battles was fought ; sorry I can't tell you where it is, but perhaps you can guess.

Saw Major H. the other day, he seems quite fit. Lots of rumours about our going back to England to reorganise, but am afraid they are not true.

THE OCCASIONAL GUN

— Field Ambulance,
July 15th, 1915.

So far at least we have had only three or four days that were really hot, usually it is cool, especially in the evenings.

The firing line has been for the past couple of weeks the quietest since we came to France. Only occasionally one hears the hoarse cough of a gun, instead of the constant roar to which we have been more or less accustomed. Expect that both forces are storing up all the ammunition possible for a big flare-up, but when or where no one knows, but expect that the Canadian Division as usual will be somewhere near the centre of the disturbance. It is marvellous the difference between safety and danger, how little it is at times.

At present our work consists in running a large Convalescent Hospital for the Division, in a quaint old French village. We have about two hundred in-patients, and besides a large outdoor clinic, so that we are kept quite busy. We keep all patients who will probably be better in a week or ten days. It keeps us going to properly equip and look after them, as of course we are not equipped for such work; however, they all seem to be quite happy, and that is the main thing.

Best wishes for the continued success of your work.

THREE MEN OF GOD

THERE are three of these who from time to time hover around my various Regimental Dressing Stations.

I imagine the powers that be give them a roving commission, as it must be difficult to frame orders for the clearance of souls. Our wounded all go down towards the base, so all our thoughts are turned in one direction. Not so the Padré's, as long as there is a biblical or ecclesiastical doubt cast on the ultimate destination of the departed, he has to make his arrangements for either direction. Generally I expect it follows the line of least resistance. The result is the golden opportunity of uncertainty.

There are, I say, three. Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Faith is calm and steadfast. His soul is young, although his hair is grey. He is pedantic to the last. I am, mark you, a Presbyterian—in his dispensation of the word—but his ministrations to the wounded are as unmixed balm in Gilead.

Faith is quite unconvinced by shell fire, and when the high explosive commences to drop around the dressing station he strolls forth to enjoy it as a maid going forth to bathe her face in the dew of a May-day morning. Parenthetically I may say that at these moments the medical officer is usually to be found in the cellar.

On the night at Gevenchy, when we brought in the dead, yes, and the wounded too, who had been lying out in No Man's Land for three sun-dried, waterless days, Faith was there. Faith was everywhere, and they say he was almost up to the German wire in his endeavour to get a really good burial party. Fifty-two he buried at one time. Did ever Padré have a more fulsome opportunity? Poor —— was shot beside him as he concluded, yet Faith never turned a hair.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." That is Faith's motto. I gave him it, it seemed so appropriate. Being a Padré, he doesn't damn when things go wrong, yet there is at times a light in his eye by which I recognise that he also is human.

Hope is a Scotsman, or at least ought to be, but I never asked him if he preferred George Wishart to Cardinal Beaton. When he retires

from the Church he will make a most excellent policeman. The drivers of the field ambulance know him as a director of traffic.

I met him early one morning stalking through the grey dawn of —— village. He was finding out where a certain regimental aid post was. I asked him why he bothered. He answered, "Sapienta potenta est." Later in the day, he guided an ambulance convoy to the same place through a hail of shrapnel.

Hope has a hip pocket; that is where I come in, as a horse after sugar. He is also a poet, yet the poetry that he writes is a faint reflection of the music in his soul. He dreams and versifies, yet we who know the true depth of those silent waters see that the verses, though marketable, are mere froth to be blown away to disclose the submerged glories of the soul beneath.

Hope refuses to retire. Rallied a company whose officers had all perforce entered the casualty lists, and led them up the hill again.

At Ypres some one suggested to Hope that he should retire; he answered, "I thought they were just straightening the line; if it's a retreat, I must return to the firing line."

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind,
Charity envieth not,
Charity vaunteth not itself."

Where all are so kind, so willing, so gentle, it were invidious to say "the greatest of these is Charity."

Charity arrives at the dressing station armed with hot-water bottles, malted milk, Oxo, sleeping-socks, and Bibles.

Charity makes you feel better just from speaking to you for two minutes; and being Charity, is the most generous thing on earth.

Charity has been bombed out of our dressing-station into another, he has had his boots filled with shrapnel, and his trousers with high explosive.

His many escapes are probably due to the fact that he wears the devil in his cap and the Cross on his breast, and so is protected on either hand.

He neither smokes nor drinks, yet being a Christian has been known also to dispense many comforts to the wounded.

He scents a wounded man from afar, and is out to meet him while the medical officer is still rubbing his eyes and demanding how any one dare get wounded so early in the morning.

Charity can carry a stretcher, and has done so many a time and oft. He knows most of his boys by name, and every casualty is a wound to himself.

These are just three. The three I have happened to meet, the three I delight to see in the dressing-station; the men with the roving commissions, who come to you in the energy of their calling and leave you the better for their visit.

We in the Canadian Division are well served by our men of God. What we would do without them I do not know. They figure in the casualty lists; do they figure enough in the honours list? Perchance their reward is in heaven; at least we will hope so.

REQUIESCANT

By Frederick George Scott

In lonely watches night by night
Great visions burst upon my sight,
For down the stretches of the sky
The hosts of dead go marching by.

Strange ghostly banners o'er them float,
Strange bugles sound an awful note,
And all their faces and their eyes
Are lit with starlit from the skies.

The anguish and the pain have passed
And peace hath come to them at last,
But in the stern looks linger still
The iron purpose and the will.

Dear Christ, who reign'st above the flood
Of human tears and human blood,
A weary road these men have trod,
Oh, house them in the home of God.

Near Ypres.
May 1915.

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